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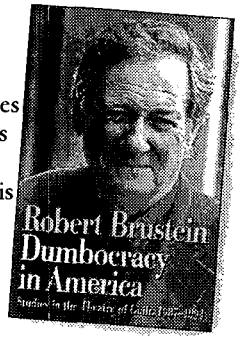

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Editor's Page

It's a sour moment. The right has attained new power, but its intellectual, not to mention moral, bankruptcy has never been more evident. The GOP's "Contract with America" regurgitates Reaganesque ideas that brought this country to many of its present difficulties. In the meantime, Newt Gingrich maligns Great Society programs and "the counterculture" as sins that begot an American fall.

Which allows him to sidestep what the 1980s wrought—a welfare state for the rich. Mr. Gingrich has a mission—to "save American civilization" from "McGovernites," "counterculturalists," and other "enemies of normal Americans." But who has been running this country for the last quarter of a century? Republicans were in the Oval Office for twenty of the last twenty-six years, and the other six found centrist if not conservative Democrats there; Congress's agenda, throughout much of the period, was set by centrist and conservative Democrats in collusion with Republicans.

A legacy of the 1960s does burden today's politics, though it's not what agitates Newt Gingrich. Sometime in that tumultuous decade, around 1964–65, America had an extraordinary opportunity for historical greatness; we could have faced and fought two scourges, poverty and racism. When this nation needed to be saying no and again no to hunger and prejudice, Republicans pursued a "Southern strategy," capitalizing on racial tension to undermine the New Deal Coalition, exploiting the country's meanest currents for political gain. They succeeded and still succeed; indeed, they've nationalized the Southern strategy.

The Republicans—here Reagan was the master—have been especially effective in pulling the center to the right. Clinton has tried to occupy the center rather than draw it left, even though he stands at a "center" defined by the Reagan era. He should pay heed to Marc Bloch, the late French historian, who once remarked: if someone to your left says two plus two is four and someone to your right says two plus two is five, the appropriate conclusion is not that two plus two is four and a half.

It is true that the Clinton administration can boast a decline in the deficit, low inflation, and lower unemployment. These aren't trivial, but none have stemmed the sense of long-term economic decline. Clinton was quick to abandon the economic stimulus package and is ill-inclined to policies that might mobilize social forces with a progressive agenda.

In foreign policy, intervention in Haiti, which received bipartisan opposition, seems to have had positive results. (This *Dissent* includes two notable articles in this regard. Michael Walzer's "The Politics of Rescue" makes a compelling case for setting aside the usual qualms about interceding abroad when the stakes are greatly imperiled populations. George Packer argues that Clinton did the right thing in Haiti.) Yet Clinton hasn't defined America's post–cold war role any more than he has reset the nation's domestic agenda.

Much can still happen in the next two years. If the Republicans have new power, it can't be said that they come with new ideas. Many conservative intellectuals have been busy playing straight men for creationists, as Michael Lind points out in his article in this issue scrutinizing the decrepit intellectual state of the right. Not that left-wing thought has been doing well lately. Atop its immediate agenda must be understanding America's rightward shift, *but not solely in light of the failure of Clinton's centrism*. The left has also failed to provide a vision that resonates in the country. We will initiate some tough-minded reconsiderations in the Spring issue of *Dissent*.

—M.C. □

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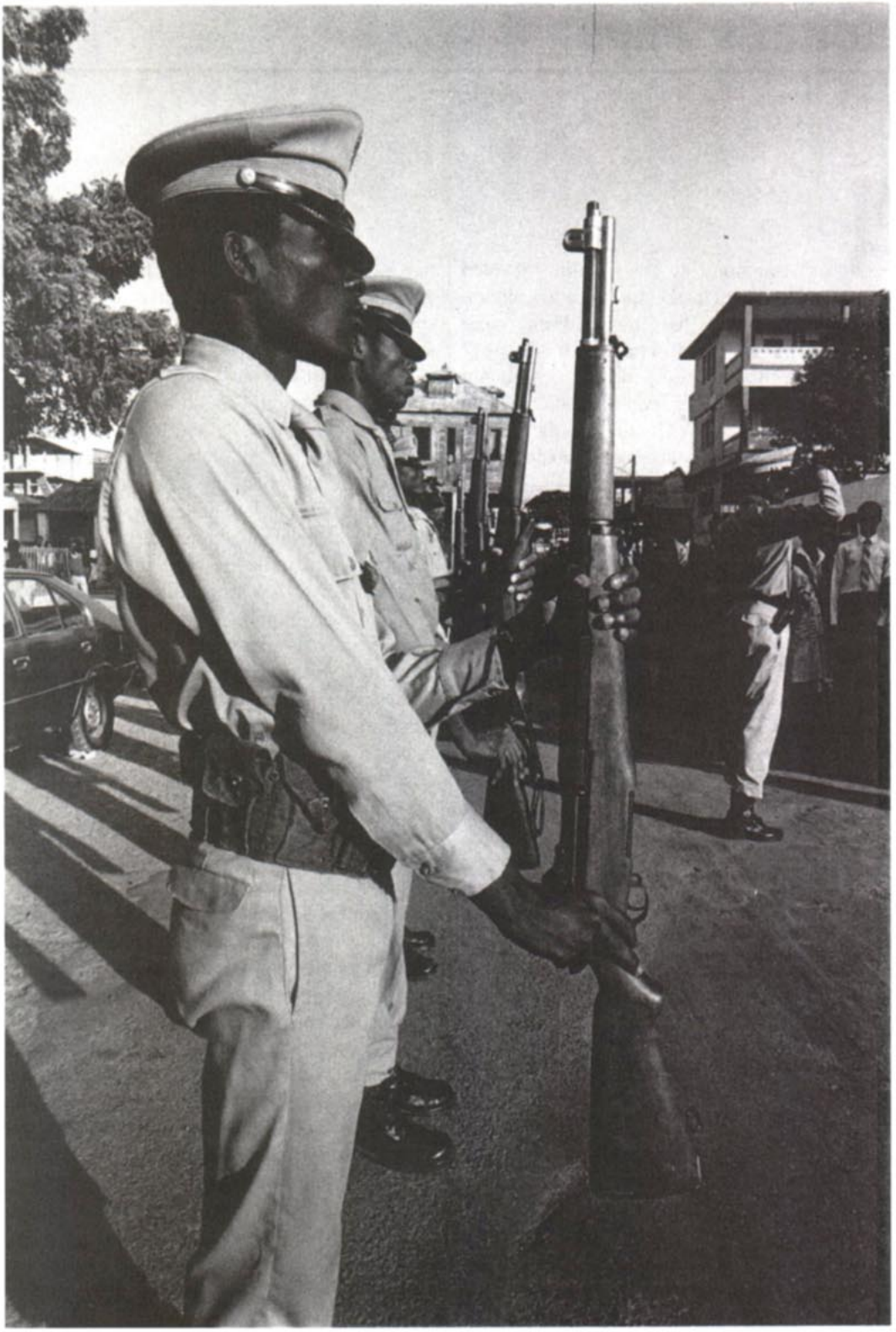

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George Packer

WHY WE ARE IN HAITI

The occupation of Haiti, the first progressive American military intervention since World War II, has also been one of the least supported. In the days leading up to the bloodless invasion, it was nearly impossible to find any American backers outside the White House and the congressional Black Caucus; since September 19, its remarkable success has won lukewarm support in some quarters and willful indifference in others. As long as no Americans are killed, Newt Gingrich and Bob Dole, who lost their voices about two weeks into the occupation, prefer not to call attention to President Clinton's most impressive foreign policy achievement. When the first picture of a dead American soldier comes back from Haiti, the clamor for withdrawal will start up again—perhaps even sooner, with a Republican Congress. And then who will there be to argue against them?

From the beginning, the response here has had very little to do with Haiti itself. Haiti is so small, so unknown, so irrelevant, so seemingly alien, that Americans can think whatever they like about it without having to take the reality of the place into account. And as a result, American attitudes have revealed far more about our own politics in a time of rancor and disbelief than about the half-island being invaded.

The public never supported the invasion—in the early days no poll showed even 50 percent in favor, a striking fact when you consider the usual initial response to military missions. Even now tolerance depends on whatever images are flickering across CNN. A Haitian police captain serious about sabotaging democracy could take the opportunity, while Port-au-Prince is full of cameras, to organize a band of attachés and ambush an American military police patrol: public support might evaporate overnight.

President Clinton bears a good deal of the blame for this, since his meandering, often contradictory policies never made the case that Haitian democracy warranted the risk of American lives. That's a hard case to make any time, but especially now. Cynicism about government in general and contempt for Clinton personally have bled beyond our borders, so that appeals to high-minded values like democracy and human rights get an echo of "failed liberalism," and Haiti becomes one more doomed waste of taxpayers' money, like health care reform and public schools.

Sour as it may be, this is a deeply satisfying point of view, since in the end nothing really works out and it's always easier to point to failures. Haiti, 80 percent illiterate, totally deforested, per capita income $250 a year, will not be an exception: to say "The intervention will fail" is to be guaranteed the last hollow laugh, wherever General Cédras happens to be living. On National Public Radio, Jack Beatty of the *Atlantic*, ostensibly a liberal, scoffed that you can't impose democracy by bayonet—as if Haitians themselves weren't already dying so that it might be "imposed" on them. Former Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney took the point further, making the cultural case that Haitian society is too poor and irrational for our ideas to take root there—a variation on the argument that black people aren't ready for freedom; this too has a domestic counterpart in Charles Murray's "They're too dumb to succeed." It's a message that part of the public seems eager to believe. At the moment, Clinton's policy has earned him a measure of

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approval, but it's a false dawn: in our time any appeal to cynicism will win hands down.

The press has generally reflected and encouraged this mood. While reporters in Haiti, such as the *New York Times*'s Rick Bragg, were assembling horrific details into a compelling case for humanitarian intervention, their editors back home, along with opinion makers in Washington, fell into an unexamined consensus that we had no interest in intervening, that Clinton was embarking on folly. George Will thought so; Anna Quindlen did too. Typically, most of the scrutiny focused on the ins and outs of Washington power: thus the last-minute Carter mission, instead of being seen as a chance to save lives (which was its main effect), became one more sign of the president's terminal weakness. The day after President Aristide's triumphant return, the *New York Times* punctuated its editorial in order to give Clinton the stingiest credit possible: "For President Clinton, it is a foreign policy victory but by no means an undiluted one"—not even a comma's pause before the bad news resumed. But the attitude of the press toward Clinton's policy has the sound of a fight that was going on long before Haiti walked into the room.

Easiest to understand, and just as unrelated to Haiti itself, is the right-wing opposition: a shell of isolationism around the opportunistic core of politicians who have never had trouble finding reasons for American interventions. If there's any principle in the conservative attack, it's the principle of not intervening for the sake of democracy. But bound up with this, as with every position the Republicans take, is an extraordinarily strong instinct for destroying Clinton's presidency. To have had the intervention's early success snatch the sure smell of his blood from their nostrils must have been maddening.

It remained, then, for Americans on the left to make the case no one else was prepared to: that the reason was democracy, that the suffering in Haiti was intolerable, that we bore some responsibility for it, and that the only choice was to intervene or allow the suffering to continue indefinitely. It was essentially a moral case, responding to concrete human facts and bringing to bear ideals whose flag the left has always carried: justice, freedom, dignity. It was the left's kind of case, and it presented an opportunity to fill a vacuum, defy right-wing know-nothingism, push public opinion in a certain direction, and make the left an important voice on a matter of foreign policy that will reverberate for years. There was, of course, a catch: the intervening would have to be done by the U.S. military, since no one else was going to do it.

In the end the catch proved decisive, for when the moment came there was no voice from the left arguing that the United States had a vital interest in democracy. From the left there was confusion, silence, and scattered protests. On balance, its response added to the national consensus that intervening in Haiti was the wrong thing to do.

It's hard not to be bitter about this missed opportunity. It was missed because people who haven't had a fresh thought since 1975 didn't want to give up the comfort of a simple worldview. With very few exceptions, they looked at Haiti and didn't see Haitians. Where others saw a basket case, a quagmire, a black mob, the left saw the next move in America's imperial game of Risk. Where others were motivated by cynicism, indifference, ignorance, or partisan politics, on the left an abstract and reflexive habit of mind counted for more than actual human suffering. When CNN televised joyful Haitian crowds welcoming the Marines, the left knew what was "really" going on behind the pictures; even after Haitian units were disarmed, Evans Paul was restored to the mayor's office, Parliament reconvened, the shattered institutions of civil society began to stir, and Aristide himself returned, the left wasn't fooled. No one bothered to explain why the Haitian power structure, fattened off embargo, needed any shoring up, or why a multibillion dollar invasion was the way to do it. The point was self-evident. The *Nation* put it succinctly: "The occupation of Haiti has nothing to do with democratic renewal but is instead a design for restoring the slightly raveled fabric of U.S. strategic and economic control that has held for most of this century."

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In the weeks between the invasion and Aristide's return, an anti-intervention coalition's flyers around Boston called for the immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops, along with the restoration of democracy and President Aristide. In private life this kind of thinking would be considered severely dissociational. But in politics, especially American left-wing politics, where years of secure powerlessness have built up a thick insulation of unreality, it passes for a reasonable position. A month after its original editorial, the *Nation* ran another under the title "One Small Cheer": "Right now, President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and Lavalas, the political movement he represents, have a better chance of restoring democracy to Haiti than at any time since the 1991 coup. In part that's thanks to Bill Clinton." A month earlier, the intervention had nothing to do with democratic renewal. This dramatic—really, almost historic—change in view carried no explanation, nor did it need to. The earlier position had simply ceased to exist.

It's difficult to expect people voluntarily to leave a fantasy world where effects have no causes, a Marine with his boot on a Haitian cop's neck is actually a Marine giving the Haitian cop a hand, and what you said yesterday implies no responsibility for what happens today or what you say tomorrow. But as long as the only sections of the left that still have a voice keep themselves locked inside, they will continue to miss clear moral issues staring them in the face.

Haiti will never be as clear as it was on September 19. Invasion was the easy choice; from then on everything becomes more complicated. The first complication came within two days: Marines, under orders not to interfere, had to watch while Haitian police near the port beat demonstrators and killed a coconut vendor. The soldiers were horrified at what they saw, and horrified not to be able to stop it. They didn't have to be instructed whose side to take: within forty-eight hours Haiti had become real for them. Since then, the military has improvised a policy of ad hoc policing and disarming. The intent is to minimize the risk to American lives, not just for the soldiers' sake but because Haiti is still such an abstraction back home that public support could vanish with the first serious casualties. In the short run, then, don't look for trouble; but in the long run this policy might lead to trouble, if enough of the structure of Haitian military and paramilitary forces is left in place with enough guns stashed away to sabotage the restored democracy and with it the American mission. At this point the attachés are bruised and lying low; no one knows what their strength could be in six months.

Meanwhile, Haitian democrats and their friends are faced with a number of terribly difficult balancing acts. They have to co-opt enough elites and officers to avoid creating powerful internal enemies, while forcing the recalcitrant to accept democratic rule. They have to reconcile national pride with the fact that Haiti will depend on the world's involvement for years to come. They have to keep American forces around long enough to provide security before the job can become international, but not so long that those forces become unpopular, as they inevitably will. They have to prevent a return to the violent street justice of the post-Duvalier days (so far the success has been amazing), and at the same time create judicial structures in a country that has never had any that worked. They have to balance reconciliation with an abused population's legitimate demand for justice, to decide whether a truth commission will serve better than legal tribunals. They have to bring confidence to a historically corrupt government stripped clean by three years of mafia-type rule, and they will have to do it under the discipline of the International Monetary Fund. There will be no question about accepting the IMF's $550 million plan of privatization, budget cuts, and foreign investment: Haiti can't afford to do anything else. But if the plan is carried out mindlessly, without regard to hardship in a country where three-fourths of the children are undernourished, then Haiti's poor will come to think democratic government just as illegitimate as the other kind.

All of this will require a great deal of compromise, moral subtlety, tolerance. As I wrote in the

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Summer 1993 *Dissent*, these haven't been the strengths of Haitian politics (nor, recently, of American politics or American attitudes toward Haiti). In Haiti, rich and poor don't think of themselves as belonging to the same country; in that sense reconciliation is the wrong word, since it implies an original state of harmony. What's needed is for the idea of a unified society with mutual rights and responsibilities to take hold for the first time. News footage from Port-au-Prince—the mobs looting sacks of flour, the crowds singing and waving leafy twigs, the wealthy riding in four-wheel-drive vehicles behind smoked glass—always reminds me of *A Tale of Two Cities* and France 1789. Haiti is essentially a country of Bourbons and Jacobins, children crushed under the wheels of carriages, tumbrels rattling over cobblestones, prisons and guillotines. It's as if Haiti has been perpetually frozen in the historical moment of its birth two centuries ago.

And yet this picture is incomplete, for there is also the strong influence of the modern world, especially in its American variety, and Haitians who are utterly committed to democracy among the poor, the middle class, and even—a few—among the rich. For their commitment they've paid a terrible price. Though I've argued for intervention on the basis of principles like democracy and human rights and international responsibility, at bottom my reasons are emotional. I want the people I met in Port-au-Prince to be able to resume the work they were doing before the coup without worrying that they'll be the next ones shot in the head. I want my friend André Joseph, a trade unionist, to be able to end his three-year exile and go home with his family. The American intervention has given people like them hope and an opportunity. We owed Haiti at least that much.

—November 1, 1994 □

Mark Levinson

ANTI-INFLATION FANATICISM AT THE FED

With the economy growing and inflation steady, why are so many people disgruntled? One reason may be that economic growth has not improved their standard of living. For example, in 1993, despite the economic recovery, the number of Americans below the poverty line *increased* by over a million and the median family income *fell*. Such a large increase in poverty and fall in family income in the second year of an economic recovery is unprecedented. Since 1989, the peak of the previous economic cycle, the typical American household lost $2,344 in annual income, a fall of 7 percent.

Given the troubled American economy one would think that maintaining, even increasing, economic growth is desirable. Yet in the topsy-turvy world of Wall Street the worry is that the economy is too strong.

According to the financial press, unless the economy slows down, wages will rise and inflation will increase at an accelerating rate. Therefore the Federal Reserve should continue to raise interest rates (which it has done six times this year) to prevent "excessive" growth.

It is hard to exaggerate the extremism of the financial community. At a conference in August of central bankers, government officials, and economists, one of Clinton's new appointments to the Federal Reserve, Alan Blinder, set off a storm of controversy by merely suggesting that, in addition to combat-

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ing inflation, the Federal Reserve should be concerned about reducing unemployment. According to the *Economist*, "Sharp intakes of breath could be heard around the room" when Blinder uttered his heresy. Robert Samuelson, *Newsweek*'s economics columnist, stated that Blinder was soft on inflation and therefore lacked "the moral or intellectual qualities needed to lead the Fed." One would hardly know from these comments that the Federal Reserve Act calls on the Fed to pursue both "maximum employment and stable prices."

The Clinton administration's problem is that it is dependent on the Fed to continue the economic recovery. Last year the Clinton administration offered $500 billion in deficit cuts through 1997 and then *hoped* that the Federal Reserve would keep interest rates low. The 1994 Economic Report of the President described it this way:

> With a greatly improved outlook for the Federal budget deficit, the Council of Economic Advisors expects long-term interest rates to remain relatively low for the foreseeable future—which will help keep economic growth on track. Low interest rates are the key ingredient that should allow the economy to grow in the face of future large deficit reductions, which would otherwise tend to contract the economy.

Initially the bond market reacted favorably to Clinton's plan, and long-term rates drifted lower and economic growth picked up in the last half of 1993. But then the Fed started raising rates. The rate rise has drained away all of the stimulus from last year's rate drop. In the face of contracting fiscal and monetary policy it is a wonder that the economy grows at all.

Clinton's decision to pursue deficit reduction and rely on the Fed to support economic growth has meant two (perhaps three) things: he will not have any money to pay for his investment program, and he has placed economic policy in the hands of an institution headed by Alan Greenspan, a conservative Republican, who sees rising employment as a threat. It may also cost him his job in 1996.

Sooner or later rising interest rates will lead consumers to quit spending money for housing, cars and other interest-sensitive goods. As business executives restrain their investments, factories will slow or shut down. Economic growth will slow; unemployment will rise; and inflation, acceptably modest now, may be reduced a bit. Eventually the economy will succumb to an unnecessary, Federal Reserve-induced, recession. The predictable consequence will be increased poverty, greater inequality, and a further deterioration in living standards.

There are times, this is one of them, when the hidden fault line of American society—the line separating those who own financial wealth from those who do not—becomes visible. Wealth holders, distinctly untypical citizens, have different economic interests than most Americans. Most families do not own stocks or bonds (except perhaps in their pension funds). A majority of the people are borrowers, not lenders. Their financial net worth is zero or negative. Government can choose to enhance the economic prospects of the many or to safeguard the accumulated wealth of the few. The Federal Reserve makes this choice by setting interest rates for the benefit of bondholders, who receive fixed interest payments on loans, and who prefer high unemployment to the merest hint of inflation.

An alternative approach favors growth over recession because unemployment is worse than inflation. The political importance attached to inflation is far out of proportion to its economic significance. Although those on a fixed income are hurt by inflation, it would not be difficult (through indexing) to protect them from rising prices. But the popular perception that inflation hurts everyone is misplaced. Inflation's primary victims are the rich. It helps borrowers (most of whom are not rich), who are happy to pay back their debts in depreciated currency. Inflation has been called the cruelest tax. So it is for the functionless investors whose incomes come mostly from interest, dividends, and capital gains.

Of course the poor are vulnerable to inflation, as they are vulnerable to almost everything. But the costs that inflation imposes

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on the poor are dwarfed by the heavy price the poor are forced to pay whenever we embark on an anti-inflation crusade.

In the Federal Reserve's war on inflation, joblessness is the main weapon. Deflation dampens business activity and discourages new investments. Old debts become more burdensome and new ones less desirable to contract. Economic growth stutters and stops. Creditors no doubt rejoice, but unemployment spreads through the economy, trade union militancy diminishes, wages are pushed further down. "Recession," Robert Lekachman once said, "is a phenomenon endured by the poor for the benefit of the prosperous."

It is long past time to end the Fed's fixation on containing inflation. Monetary policy is too important to be left to bankers. □

Sean Wilentz

CALLING THE STRIKE

The abbreviation of the 1994 baseball season depressed millions of Americans, but it was crushing for fans of the New York Yankees. What a team we had: not Murderers' Row, maybe, but strong up the middle, deep on the bench, with solid hitting through the entire lineup, plus the miraculous Jimmy Key. *Dammit, it was our year*. Or so it looked so *late* in the year that many of us had cleared our calendars for October.

Nothing good has come of this, which is a shock to the system, because baseball fans are used to finding something good in the direst of circumstances. Especially Yankee fans, for whom the past decade, on the field and off, hovered between the boring and the excruciating until the recent turnaround. Even under Steinbrenner's surreal rule, even during the successive mediocre summers, there has always been reason enough for hope: a prospect up from Columbus, a three-game winning streak in June. But not this past year, *our year*, because the team owners had secretly decided long ago there would be no year this year.

Well, maybe just a little good has come of it. When reality intrudes on romance, make the best of reality—and so it went with the reporting of this mess, as sportswriters and broadcasters had to become quick studies in industrial politics and microeconomics. Coverage of labor troubles, especially with a broad sympathy for labor, has been in decline in the mainstream American media for a long time. In New York, the heyday of labor reporting was over by the 1960s; and even the *Times* has not had a regular labor correspondent since the departure of William Serrin in the 1980s. But for a while, as the season hung in the balance, the New York sports pages began to look like the labor pages.

At the *Times*, Murray Chass skillfully explained the doomed negotiations and the larger issues at stake. The columnist George Vecsey brilliantly evoked the owners' bad faith. A piece by Pat Jordan in the Sunday magazine treated management to a humorous drubbing worthy of the old *Masses*. The tabloids, especially the *Daily News*, made up in style what they lacked in explication. At the *New Yorker*, Roger Angell's annual end-of-season review filled in some of the gaps about the owners' maneuvering.

Some of the best reporting came over the radio on the city's all-sports station, WFAN. Just after the team owner and acting commissioner, Bud Selig, officially pulled the plug on

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the season, the station's Ed Coleman (who normally covers the Mets) held a kind of wake, talking to managers and players, and leaving little doubt that this entire business could have been averted had the owners not wanted it to occur. And then there was the incomparable Suzyn Waldman, the station's regular Yankee correspondent. Waldman won my admiration years ago as a straight sports reporter, with her frankness, her hard work, and her exceptional knowledge of the game. Nobody on the air conducts better post-game interviews and locker-room reports. After the strike hit, she was the first person I heard pronounce the blunt but truthful words about what was really going on: "Union busting."

A renaissance of labor reporting is not exactly what I had looked forward to back during spring training. I would have given it all back in a second for a full season. But you take what you can get. Imagine if, now, Steinbrenner, fed up with the situation, were to step aside; if Don Mattingly, rejuvenated by the layoff, were to play another five seasons; and if Waldman, the best reporter on the beat, were to be named the Yankees' play-by-play announcer. All very unlikely. But there's no point in being a baseball fan unless you can dream a little. □

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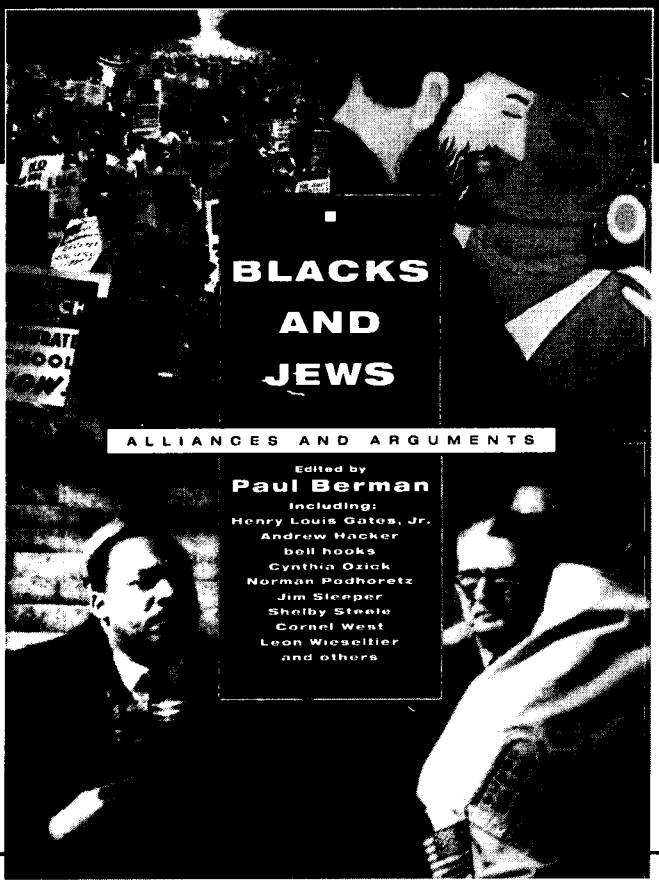

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Susannah Heschel

FEMINISTS GAIN AT CAIRO POPULATION CONFERENCE

Feminists won a major victory at the UN Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo last September, making the empowerment of women the central issue of population policy. Slowing population growth will henceforth have to be addressed within the larger context of human rights for women.

Unfortunately, crucial discussions of economic development were neglected at the ten-day meeting, and environmental concerns were almost thoroughly ignored. Representatives from southern hemisphere countries, in particular, complained that abortion debates distracted the conference from pressing social and economic issues.

The focus on women's issues created new political alliances, such as a coalition of the Vatican and conservative Muslim leaders demanding revisions of the conference's proposed final declaration to suit their teachings on human sexuality. The first five days were virtually hijacked by the Vatican's demand for the elimination of the document's characterization of "unsafe abortion" as a "major public health concern." Muslims, emboldened by the Vatican, condemned the statement as a Western imperialist assault on the family, although Islamic teachings permit most forms of contraception and abortion to save the mother's life.

By the end of the conference, the Vatican was defeated and feminists prevailed. Abortion remained in the document, as did most of the other controversial language concerning contraception and the rights of "the family in all its forms." There never was a call for internationally legalized abortion, as the Vatican charged, but rather the demand that governments, in countries where abortion is legal, must ensure that they are performed without damaging the health of women. By the fourth day of the conference, of the initial seventeen governments that had endorsed the Vatican's position on abortion, the only countries that remained supportive were Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, Ecuador, and Malta. Even more telling was the absence of any papal protest against contraception, which is equally taboo in Vatican theology. Clearly, the pontiff's representatives had realized that opposition to contraception in Cairo would have simply made the Church look foolish. Ultimately, the Vatican accepted the final document.

The first two UN meetings on population, held in Bucharest in 1974 and Mexico City in 1984, called for mass production and distribution of (mostly female) birth control devices. The goal was a quick reduction in the worldwide population growth, which was then at about 2 percent per year, a rate that would have doubled the population in just thirty-five years. In Bucharest, Karan Singh, then India's family planning minister, coined a now famous slogan: "Development is the Best Contraceptive." It is now evident, however, that because of unequal distribution of wealth, economic development in poorer countries does not necessarily lower the overall birth rate. Rather, it results in lowered birth rates for the small minority who amass personal wealth. Nor does development necessarily improve women's lives; as Gertrude Mongella, Secretary General of the UN Fourth World Conference on

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Women, scheduled for Beijing next year, stated in Cairo, "Women have become the third world of developing nations."

The effort during the past two decades to make available contraceptive devices in many of the most remote villages of the world has been quite successful. However, this has not led to significant lowering of birthrates. The world rate is now 1.7 percent, but when applied to today's population, the result is an annual increase in absolute numbers that is larger than ever before. Studies published during the 1980s and 1990s indicate that even when contraception is readily accessible, the birthrate does not necessarily alter significantly. For example, in Egypt the use of contraceptives by couples rose from 24 percent in 1980 to 47 percent in 1992. Although this led to a drop in the total fertility rate (number of children per family) from 5.3 to 3.9, which is commendable progress, it is still far above UN goals. China, with its coercive one-child per-couple state policies, made dramatic progress, but only managed to lower birthrates from 2.8 percent in 1979 to 2 percent in 1991, and still is producing more people than any other country.

What *does* lower birthrates? Economists and social scientists—together with feminists and women's health advocates—point to the crucial correlation between lower birthrates and education, economic independence, and basic political rights of women. For example, Amartya Sen compares India's Kerala province, which lowered its birth rate from 3.0 percent to 1.8 percent between 1979 and 1994, and China, which, during the same years, saw its rates decline from 2.8 percent to 2.0 percent. The success of Kerala—and of some regions of China—is due not to state coercion, but to social factors such as women's literacy (86 percent in Kerala, 68 percent overall in China), life expectancy, women's involvement in economic and political life, and securing rights such as inheritance. In other words, if a woman has a life of her own, she is satisfied to create just one or two more lives.

Before Cairo, a growing coalition of women's rights groups, health workers, and social scientists attended preparatory meetings at which government delegates worked out the proposed UN document. Since women constitute only 3 percent of parliament members worldwide, their involvement as international governmental representatives is minuscule. The absurdity of a predominantly male conference determining international population policy led the UN to encourage increased participation of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), mostly women's rights groups, at Cairo and in the preparatory meetings.

As a result, Cairo had a larger number of NGO representatives in government delegations than any previous UN conference, and the NGOs had unparalleled access to official governmental delegations. The NGOs pressed for a consensus around the idea that birthrates can be significantly lowered only in societies that grant women the right to education, economic independence, and decisions over reproduction.

Setback for Environmentalists

The human rights language articulated in Cairo was drawn largely from the UN Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in 1993. Unfortunately the environmental agenda established just two years ago at the UN Earth Summit in Rio was barely heard.

In fact, Cairo marked a defeat for environmental activists, who—or so was my experience—were unable to link ecological to women's issues. As a consequence, lectures they sponsored at the NGO Forum were poorly attended and seemed marginal to the conference. Similarly, the NGO women's rights discussion did not raise issues of environmental sexism. While the final document makes passing reference to environmental problems related to population growth, no concrete policies were formulated to address them.

The environmentalists, who were primarily American-based, missed a valuable opportunity to show linkages between environmental degradation and impaired fertility, fetal malformation, diseases of pregnancy, infant mortality, and so forth. Instead, they either concentrated

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on North American issues, such as the Waxman Bill to remove lead paint from urban dwellings, or discussed issues of eco-system deterioration that had no direct relevance to the main questions being debated.

At the same time, although a substantial body of eco-feminist research has been published in recent years, including significant literature from southern hemisphere countries, feminist perspectives on environmental problems were absent from the Cairo discussions. This was due to two factors. First, the American environmentalist groups in Cairo, such as the Sierra Club, the Environmental Defense Fund, and Physicians for Social Responsibility, have consistently underplayed feminist issues. Second, tensions over population control that emerged between feminists and environmentalists at the Rio Summit have never been resolved.

Although the Sierra Club has made population control and reduction of consumption central to its agenda, it has not forged an alliance with women's rights activists who seek improved health services for women and who define reproductive rights as a human rights issue. At the Earth Summit, feminists were angered by what they saw as demands by environmentalists for coercive family-planning programs in developing countries. In Rio, the Vatican assisted feminist groups in their effort to eliminate references to population control from the final text, Agenda 21. In Cairo, the Sierra Club and the Environmental Defense Fund included reproductive health on their agenda, but the mostly male speakers at their sessions did not engage with the feminist discourse of the conference.

Mutilation of Women

The most dramatic issue raised in Cairo concerned female genital mutilation, which was condemned in the final declaration. This practice, inaccurately termed female circumcision, has evoked controversy and rage at international conferences for two decades. Whereas male circumcision involves removing a piece of skin, the mildest form of female genital mutilation, clitoridectomy, is roughly equivalent to amputation of the penis. Cairo marked a welcome change in discussions of this practice. In the past, when Western feminists denounced it, we were accused of ignoring indigenous cultural traditions and imposing Western ideology. Now, for the first time, large numbers of African women themselves raised the issue. Their studies indicate that mutilation is more widespread and severe than previously assumed.

A World Health Organization (WHO) report issued in August says that 50 percent of Egyptian women have been mutilated, a total of nearly fourteen million, with infibulation (removal of the clitoris, labia minora, and labia majora, followed by suturing of the skin to close all but a tiny orifice) practiced in regions closer to Sudan, amputation of the clitoris elsewhere. At the Cairo conference, however, Egyptian physicians presented findings indicating that 91 percent of women living in Cairo had been subjected to clitoridectomies, and that an even higher number of rural Egyptian women had undergone the more severe infibulation. The reports in Cairo also confirmed assumptions that genital mutilation is less frequently practiced among the children of urban women, who have education and jobs, thus linking its eradication to the same factors that promote lowered birth rates. Apart from the North African countries of Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, and Algeria, other regions of Africa show nearly universal mutilation, varying only on the extent of the amputation. The WHO reports that infibulation is found among 98 percent of women in Djibouti and Somalia and among 90 percent in Ethiopia. Worldwide, the WHO concludes that 114,296,900 women have been mutilated.

The cultural origins of female genital mutilation remain unclear. The practice is found among Muslims, Christians, and Jews, but is rooted in none of those religious traditions. If it is not motivated by religious law, why is it practiced? Parents who have their daughters circumcised are aware that they are eliminating sexual desire; they tell investi-

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gators that circumcised girls will not become licentious. Additional factors include misconceptions that Islam requires the practice and pressures of social conformity within the family and community. Circumcision is called "tahara" in Arabic, meaning "pure" or "clean," and women who are uncircumcised are shunned as dirty.

Although Egyptian activists made a strong case against mutilation at the conference, heated debate followed the showing of a film entitled *Tahara*, made by an Egyptian feminist. Several Muslim representatives angrily declared that genital mutilation is in accord with Islam.

Brandishing a *Fatwa* (religious edict) issued by al-Azhar, the renowned center for Islamic learning in Cairo, they asserted that although classical Muslim texts do not prescribe it, mutilation is legitimate because curbing the licentious behavior of women is indeed a goal of their religion, and physically removing sexual desire does just that.

Such contentions simply reinforce the most important dimension of Cairo: the empowerment of women. Overpopulation, the conference declared, is an aspect of a larger problem: the maltreatment of women worldwide. From its outset, the modern feminist movement has argued that a woman cannot control her life if she cannot control her fertility. At Cairo, this was reformulated: unless a woman has a life of her own, her fertility will be out of control.

Coercive pregnancies, genital mutilation, denial of the basic requirements of an independent life—such as education and property—are all questions of basic human rights. And as an Indonesian delegate said, the more that women demand their rights, the more they will be viewed not "as receptacles of birth control devices, but rather as agents of change." □

Mitchell Cohen

NATIONS AND SAUSAGES

A Report from Central and Eastern Europe

Hopes on the left, that social democracy might become the alternative to collapsing communism and rising market fundamentalism in Eastern and Central Europe after 1989, have proven to be chimerical. Today, except in the Czech Republic, social democracy barely exists as an independent force in the ex-communist lands. And ex-Communist parties, many claiming to be "social democratized," now sit in governments across the region. They harnessed social discontent that came of marketization, and largely occupy what might have been social democratic political space.

Five years ago we heard from many ex-dissidents that, whatever alternatives had been championed in the struggle against communism, everyone now believed that the options were, so to speak, Stalin or Hayek. A type of "economic correctness" had arisen, partly as an understandable reaction to the bastardized utopianism born of communist experiments. Yet radical change—dismantling communism is nothing less—always needs expansive horizons, and as a Hungarian philosopher ruefully remarked to me in 1990, these were "revolutions without imagination."

Indeed, they became revolutions of imitation. "We don't want to be experimented on any longer," was a popular refrain. This will to imitate is also understandable, for it rested on a will to Western economic prosperity; anyone born into plenty ought to pause before looking askance at it. Still, this doesn't lessen the irony: the alternative to "experiments" was deemed to be radical marketization imposed from top down—command spontaneity, as one

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commentator calls it.[1] This was nothing if not an experiment, for nowhere before had it been attempted. And now the imitators have been displaced in elections by their predecessors—who end up being imitators thrice over. First they followed Moscow; now they accept economic correctness; in the meantime, they declare themselves "social democrats."

The Czech Exception

What happened to traditional social democrats? It's useful to begin in the one place where they have had some success, the Czech Republic. Before and just after World War II, Czechoslovakian social democracy was vibrant. But following their 1948 coup, the Stalinists behaved, well, like Stalinists: social democracy was banned, its properties seized, only to be retrieved by a recreated party subsequent to the Velvet Revolution. In the aftermath of 1989, Social Democrats worked within Civic Forum, the broad protest movement that ousted the communists. When Civic Forum fragmented in 1991, a social democratic parliamentary base was fashioned, thanks in particular to a faction of '68ers (deputies who were ex-reform communists) who joined the party.

One factor benefiting the Social Democrats, who claim twelve thousand party members, is the Czech Communists. Though they ousted their pre-1989 leaders, they are unreformed and carry a heavy historical burden: the liquidation of "socialism with a human face." "The last chance for the CP was 1968," observes Svetlana Navarova, international affairs secretary of the Social Democrats. Today, the political space open to Prague's "post-communists" has limits, although they won 13 percent of the vote in 1992. What confines communists opens possibilities for Social Democrats, who obtained about 7 percent of the vote in those elections.

At the same time, Social Democrats have a formidable foe in Premier Vaclav Klaus, an adept politician whose verbal vehemence on behalf of radical market economics led the *Economist* to label him "Vaclav Thatcher." In that same magazine, in September, Klaus preached to West Europeans: your economies are ailing because the "Thatcherite Revolution" against the welfare state "stopped at best half-way." But the Czech premier is clever; his speeches are flush with market fundamentalism while his policies are more flexible. Prague subsidizes housing and heating, maintains a minimum wage, and transfers funds obtained by privatizations to aid industries in trouble, thereby minimizing unemployment. (The privatization process is to be completed this winter.) In these circumstances, Social Democrats haven't been very successful in formulating an alternative vision: mostly, they argue for less monetarism, for more investment in infrastructure, environment, and education, and for fashioning agricultural cooperatives out of the old regime's collective farms.

Klaus is, moreover, able to pursue his goals unhindered by ethnic tensions. He was instrumental, by New Year's 1993, in bringing seventy-four-year-old Czechoslovakia to an end. Combine the "Velvet Divorce" with recent history—the occupation, genocide, and expulsions of world war—and the result is a largely homogeneous country. True, there are some three hundred thou-

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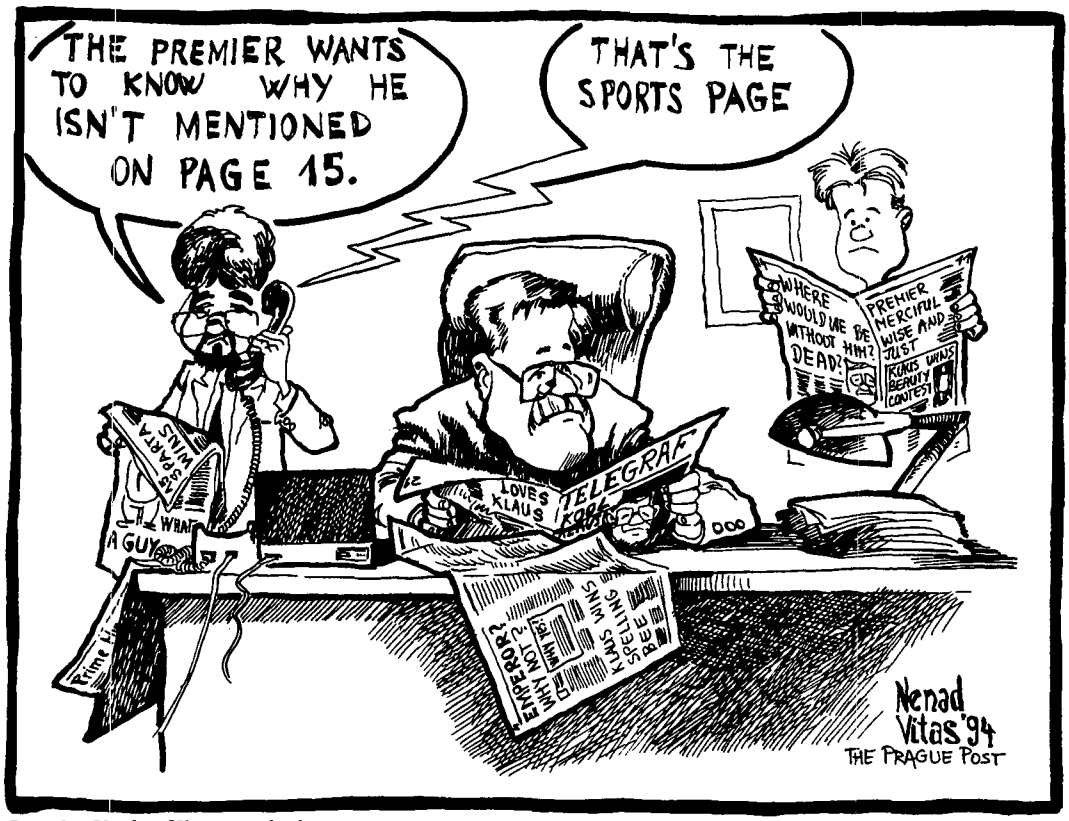
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Premier Vaclav Klaus reads the paper. *Reprinted by permission from the* Prague Post.

sand Gypsies, but a manipulative new citizenship law aims to push as many of them as possible into Slovakia. One writer, in the *Prague Post*, called this an "attempt to create as ethnically pure a state as possible."

Klaus also pursues his policies unrestrained by President Vaclav Havel who, though often at odds with the premier, has little power. He recently told an interviewer that "views that no one in the West would call left are considered left here." In any event, Havel seems preoccupied with being philosopher-president. The week of the new citizenship law in Prague, he was orating at Independence Hall, where he received the Philadelphia Liberty Medal. After presenting a curious potpourri of "anti-anthropomorphic" sentiments with New Age echoes, he concluded that the "task of the final years of this century . . . is the creation of a new model of coexistence among the various peoples, races and religious spheres within a single interconnected civilization." Gypsies would have found this interesting.

A Post-Communist Peron?

In September 1994, Slovakia had its first democratic elections as an independent state. The results were portentous. Vladimir Meciar's Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) won 35 percent of the vote, some 25 points ahead of any competitor. This made HZDS the leading party, and it also made it very difficult to assemble a governing coalition. Meciar, an ex-boxer, ex-communist turned nationalist-populist demagogue, had been ousted from the premiership just the previous spring by a coalition of parties that, led by Jozef Muravcik, his former foreign minister, were fearful of this bully's authoritarian ways.

"Meciar is a post-communist Peron," a Slovak citizen with social democratic sympathies told me in Bratislava not long before the vote. "Imagine Peron had been educated by Moscow's Komsomol school instead of the Argentine military—there you have Meciar." For Meciar, it seems, principle is a means to opportunity. He once told some foreign social

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democrats that he too was a social democrat but couldn't say it "aloud" because Slovaks were anticommunist and local Social Democrats work with ex-communists. In the meantime, almost all the other parties in the country were willing to share power with the Communist party's successor, the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL), to contain Meciar.

As premier, Meciar specialized in exploiting disaffection with Prague and in encouraging prejudice against the country's Hungarian minority. Combine this with Klaus's agenda and the Velvet Divorce was unavoidable. As to the opinions of ordinary Czechs and Slovaks—this concerned the two leaders little. No referendum was allowed, though polls showed overwhelming opposition to the breakup.

Klaus's program, notes Miroslav Spejl, vice chairman of the Slovak Social Democrats, "was simply no good for Slovakia where the economy is different from the Czech lands." The Slovak economy was much more dependent on sectors—big industrial and military plants—that are difficult to privatize. Depriving them of subsidies would have incurred heavy social costs. Klaus knew this; he was spared by the Velvet Divorce, just as railing against Prague fueled Meciar's popularity.

If Social Democrats are a real presence on the Czech scene, in Slovakia theirs is "a difficult life," as Spejl puts it. After 1989 they sought to develop apart from the Czechs (though with ongoing contacts) and, with about a thousand members, have ended up political and financial dependents of the SDL, which, with forty-five thousand members, is seeking membership in the Socialist International. The SDL leads Common Choice, a left coalition including the Social Democrats, Greens, and the Farmer's Movement. With 10.4 percent of the vote, it became the second largest parliamentary bloc (followed by a coalition of parties from the Hungarian minority with 10.2 percent and Christian Democrats with 10.1 percent). Peter Weiss, a shrewd politician who paid much attention to how ex-CPs reformed in Poland and Hungary, sought to pilot the SDL toward social democratic politics. However, Common Choice's modest showing at the polls in September led some SDL figures, who are less social-democratized, to press for participation in a new Meciar government.

The history of the Social Democratic party, an ex-member told me, "is one of mistakes, losses, and disasters." One disaster was beyond its control: Alexander Dubcek, hero of the Prague Spring, joined the party in 1992 and was to be its leader, but an auto accident took his life soon after. In the meantime, Social Democrats were trying to build an organization *ex nihilo*, while the SDL had assets from its communist predecessor. Specific decisions were also ruinous. Whereas Czech Social Democrats established a parliamentary base through the Civic Forum, the Slovaks ran independently of Public Against Violence, Civic Forum's counterpart in their part of the country. Lacking structure and means, they fared poorly. After the Velvet Divorce, Slovak Social Democrats were without MPs because the federal Parliament was dissolved and they had no seats in the lower chamber that became the basis of Slovakia's Parliament.

There is, moreover, a broader picture to be kept in mind. Opposition to communism was weaker in Bratislava than in Prague, partly because four decades of communism brought substantial economic development to Slovakia. These gains were, however, coupled with resentment toward Prague. Sociologist Sona Szomolanyi points out that in Bratislava in 1968, "the demand for federalization dominated over the demand for democratization." After the Soviet invasion, repression was milder in Bratislava than in Prague. As a consequence, while post-1968 Czech Communists were ideological fundamentalists, in Bratislava perestroika-oriented party members helped form the SDL when the old regime fell.

In 1989, notes Szomolanyi, "the Slovak population was fairly satisfied with its living standards, but there was dissatisfaction over the split between public and private. You could say nothing in public. People were willing to accept lower living standards for a short period in exchange for freedom, but they also expected eventual economic improvement."[2] Those reforms that have been implemented

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brought 15 percent unemployment and little foreign investment by the fall of 1994.

All this abetted Meciar's agitations against the fragile coalition that displaced him. "Although Slovak nationalism is underdeveloped," remarks Milan Simecka, a Bratislava intellectual, "it is as brutal and arrogant as nationalism elsewhere." In the past, Slovakia was ruled either from Prague or, earlier, from Budapest. Its single previous experience of "sovereignty" was the Nazi-collaborationist regime of Father Josef Tiso during World War II. Today, newly independent, Slovaks face the difficult task of defining their identity. Nationalism, in this context, is a "normal development," observes Iveta Radicova of Bratislava's Social Policy Analysis Center. Unfortunately, this redefinition occurs in propitious conditions for figures like Meciar: economic hardship in a political culture unpracticed in democratic norms.

A Republic for Everyone?

Across the border, in Poland, the postcommunists returned to power with a startling election victory in fall 1993. They call themselves "Social Democrats" now and, like other ex-Communist parties, include legitimate social democrats along with people who have learned only that the word "Leninist" won't get them far anymore. But political classifications are a tricky matter in the postcommunist world. Vladimir Zhirinovsky's neo-Fascists have named themselves Russia's "Liberal Democrats."

What does it mean to be "left of center" in Poland today? I asked this of a journalist at *Polityka*, a leading Warsaw weekly usually described as left. "Words, and nothing more," he responded. "The right says: we must first have a sound economy and then move forward. The left says: we must have a sound economy but must care for the disadvantaged—a consideration absent from right-wing language. The results are the same. The right, in government, couldn't cut off the poor and pensioners. The left, in government, can't help them much. In the end there is no alternative to the liberal program because there is no money. Gradual reform means propping up industries making unsalable goods."

"No alternative" also seems to be the mindset of the ruling ex-communists. Whether because they were unprepared for their return to power or because in the past they always had an outside authority for economic doctrine, they have little new to say, much less an independent program, and govern, more or less, in a makeshift mode, mostly carrying on what the other post-1989 governments began. "The restoration of the ex-communists today," Adam Michnik told me in his office at *Gazeta Wyborcza*, the daily he edits, "is like all restorations—empty and cynical."

One reason for the popularity of the "Social Democrats" is the social distress caused by "shock therapy." The original Solidarity rested on a remarkable alliance between intellectuals and a democratic workers' movement. After martial law was imposed in 1981, an underground continued the struggle, and like all undergrounds, from Lenin's to the Maquis, it had to be narrow to survive. A mass movement re-emerged in 1989, but this Solidarity, which finally displaced the old regime, was not the same social movement that existed before martial law, and was much more politically heterogeneous. Soon after its elite took over the cabinet, Solidarity's early vision of change from below and democracy in the workplace was something of the past. The government implemented radical market reforms and, in the words of political economist Tadeusz Kowalik, "subjected the country to shock therapy without any public debate." No wonder critics speak of "market Leninism." Solidarity splintered.

Those unions that still call themselves "Solidarity" bear little resemblance to the original and tend to be right-wing with nationalist and/or clerical orientations. In contrast, the Union of Labor, formed in 1992 by three left-wing offshoots of Solidarity, tries to be a genuine social democratic voice. It won 7.3 percent of the vote last year criticizing blind acceptance of Western economic models and warning that vast inequalities of wealth would imperil democracy. It called for calibrated economic change guided by a social contract between the regime and a mobilized and organized citizenry.

Similar ideas, and something of Solidarity's initial spirit, may drive a bid for Poland's

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presidency in 1995 by Jacek Kuron, whose Democratic Union won 10 percent of the vote in 1993 running as a centrist party. A brilliant figure in the struggle against the old regime, this gruff, burly fellow reminded me, when I visited him in his Warsaw flat in August, of a caricature of a Chicago ward boss. Yet caricature it would be, for behind an abrasive exterior is someone articulating ideas that could fuel a vigorous debate over the first principles of postcommunist change.

Kuron was a leader of the Solidarity left before 1989, but famously concluded that social democracy was meaningless until Poland had full-blown capitalism. He became a champion of shock therapy as labor minister—and still insists on its necessity—but now questions "the elitist method" of transformation. Last May he published a pamphlet entitled "A Republic for Everyone," and his argument is reminiscent of Solidarity's 1981 program which called for a decentralized "self-governing republic."

"Solidarity collapsed," says Kuron, "because having formed the [first noncommunist] government from its own ranks, it then acted above society rather than placing itself at the head of a newly fashioned mass movement."[3] The elite method, deployed by all the Polish governments since communism fell, falsely assumes that there is only one form of economic rationality and fails to recognize that there can be "different rationalities" within a market society. The elitists lack an adequate sense of social needs and imagine that the state can reject all its past functions. Yet postcommunist societies cannot simply follow Western models, warns Kuron, who calls for a decentralized Poland, enhanced local government, workers' self-management, and the development of cooperatives within a "social market economy."

As an alternative to the "elite method," Kuron proposes an "interactional" one. Civil society would be mobilized by fostering new social actors and movements, especially reinvigorated labor unions. Major issues would be addressed by social contracts produced by interaction between government initiative and an activated citizenry. Polish society harbors, as a dual legacy of communism, deep frustrations and an ingrained socialist sense of what's just and unjust, says Kuron. What's just includes the right to a job, shelter, health care, education, culture, and social insurance. Consequently, privatization should be social privatization: remuneration gained from it should, among other things, pay for welfare institutions and social needs.

Kuron sees himself addressing Polish dimensions of global problems, but when he looks beyond his borders, his thinking falters badly and even sounds opportunistic. One is baffled to hear him praise the International Monetary Fund for following *his* method of change. He seems to have no sense of the mood in G-7 countries when he calls on them to deploy resources equivalent to those used to fight the cold war—"The Marshall Plan is much too small"—in a global program to "equalize opportunities."

Still, a "Republic for Everyone" may well be attuned to what Kuron calls—and polls confirm as—the left-of-center but disheartened mood of Poles. Yet if Poles lean left on social matters, they are also allergic to anything that sounds ideological. This is probably why Kuron insisted to me that his proposals were "practical, not axiological." Jerzy Jedlicki, a Warsaw political scientist, observes, "People do not respond to symbolic politics today even though this was such a part of Poland's political past and of the struggle against communism. There appears to be an aversion to aggressive political language."

The failure to recognize this damaged right-wing and nationalist parties in the last elections. "The Poland that has emerged doesn't find nationalism too useful," observes Konstanty Gebert of the foreign desk of *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Poles harbor an intense sense of national identity, something tied closely to religion for them, but they aren't much excited by typical nationalist concerns like borders. In the 1993 campaign, the Christian National Union, with backing from many clergymen, tried to make an issue of the status of Poles in neighboring lands (Lithuania, Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus); it lost all its seats. Last summer, the press devoted much attention to the sixty

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thousand Poles in Khazakhstan, but this aroused little public response. If masses of immigrants from this heavily Russified community streamed into Poland, major social problems would ensue. In a time of economic hardship Polish citizens are too preoccupied with paying for daily groceries to respond to exhortations for sacrifice so that this—or another—Polish diaspora could be repatriated.

An important factor undercutting nationalism is this: apart from Gypsies, Poland today is an ethnically and religiously homogeneous society because of war, expulsions, and genocide. Traditional sources of nationalist disquiet are gone, with no major national minorities within (the Jews are largely gone, though one still hears stories of anti-Semitism) and no threats from without, especially from the traditional enemies, Germany and Russia (though Poles watch Moscow with apprehension).

"Solidarity with a small 's' won't get you very far in Poland today," observes Gebert, adding that "there is a lot of egoism and little sense of social responsibility." Free enterprise, it seems, is undermining "the nineteenth-century ethos of an ethnic community also bound by faith. The last five years increasingly showed people that you can get ahead by business but not by being a nationalist activist or poet. The rhetoric is still around but the commitment is gone; Polish nationalism doesn't seem to move from passive to active today."

Conservative Nationalists Defeated

Hungarian society, like those of Poland and the Czech lands, is, except for the Gypsies, largely homogeneous. But here the national question is a cross-border matter, and it especially preoccupied Hungary's first postcommunist government, a nationalist coalition that was decisively defeated at the polls in spring 1994. Its principal component, the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), was led, until his death in 1993, by historian Jozsef Antall, a highly respected figure, though not an especially effective premier. (He was succeeded by MDF's Peter Boross.)

In its pre-1989 incarnation, the MDF was a nationalist and populist opposition group with ties to reformers in the Communist party, and was willing to join them in a coalition government. On the other hand, the Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz, according to its Hungarian initials), the liberal oppositionists who were soon to be the MDF's electoral rivals, was unyielding in its refusal to sit in a cabinet with Communists, reform or otherwise.

After the 1990 balloting, in which the MDF ran first, garnering a quarter of the vote, Antall formed a coalition without the Free Democrats or the Communists. The latter began to reinvent themselves as the Hungarian Socialist party (SP), declaring "social democratic" aspirations, and losing many Leninist fundamentalists to a splinter party. Attempts to resurrect the Hungarian Social Democratic party were beset by squabbles, splits, and incompetent leadership; the party collapsed at the polls in the spring of 1990. Unable to repair itself, it left void any political space social democrats might have filled.

The SP, in part, filled the space. In 1990, in disgrace, it gained 10 percent of the vote. It resurrected itself so successfully by 1994 that it won an absolute majority in Parliament (with a third of the vote, but a plurality in every social sector). Rather than rule alone, its leader, Gyula Horn, who became premier, formed a government that included the same SzDSz that four years earlier rejected such a coalition. SzDSz's leader, Gabor Kuncze, became deputy premier and minister of the interior. Although the SzDSz has a social democratic component, it tends to be dominated by its liberals and has opted for membership in the Liberal International, whereas the SP has turned to the Socialist International.

How does the MDF understand its defeat? "The anxiety of freedom. It was a vote against social insecurity caused by the change." This was the principal explanation of Gyula Kodolanyi, an urbane, soft-spoken poet who was one of Antall's advisers. The MDF, he is certain, "doesn't have a problem of general philosophy," and he insists that it was not the sentiments of Hungarians but the electoral system, whose technicalities allow parties a larger proportion of seats in Parliament than their percentage of the vote, that permitted a decisive SP victory. (His own party, he did not note, benefited from the same rules in 1990.)

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He ominously suggested that the SP had "informal networks" throughout the land that undermined his government's reforms.

Things may have been simpler. Hungary's exit from communism was a gradual process. The MDF presented itself in 1989–90 as a moderate nationalist party committed to temperate change, and this was a winning combination in a moment of great uncertainty. On the other hand, the SzDSz and FIDESZ (the League of Young Democrats) championed radical liberalism and rapid marketization. Liberal precepts had their appeal but also limits, partly because the population was ill-inclined to ideology.

By 1994 popular attitudes hadn't changed much, but perceptions of parties had. A survey in 1993 virtually predicted the election results. When asked to rate political priorities, Hungarians gave as the top five (out of eighteen): (1) competent managers for the economy; (2) improvement of education and health care; (3) easing the burdens of economic transition; (4) decreasing unemployment; (5) raising pensions and social benefits. In short, socioeconomic matters were foremost in the citizenry's mind. Themes favored by MDF were on the bottom of the inventory: strengthening "national feeling" was fourteenth; removing ex-CP members from leading functions was sixteenth; increasing "the influence of religion and the Churches" was the eighteenth, and last, preference. Liberal priorities such as promoting "private enterprise and free markets" and speeding up privatization of state companies ranked, respectively, thirteenth and fifteenth.[4]

"The MDF wanted to speak about 'Hungarianness,' 'Hungarian values,' and imperiled Hungarians across the borders," philosopher Mihaly Vajda remarks, "but Hungarian citizens wanted to talk about sausage on their plates." Meanwhile, the SP, many of whose leaders had been reformers during the more prosperous years of "goulash communism," presented itself as a pragmatic party of competent economic managers. The SzDSz, though moderating the shrillness that attended its earlier campaign, was still perceived by many as too ideological, and FIDESZ, which ran with considerable success in 1990 as a radical liberal youth movement, had devolved into a party of intellectually smug, neoconservative Yuppies. The ruling MDF was perceived to have skewed—that is, ideological—priorities and to be economically ineffective.

In unsettled times, especially during economic upheavals, nationalism, often its virulent strains, flourishes. Nationalism provides markers, chimerical or real, for apprehensive populations. But not always; as we've seen, it hasn't resonated much in economically distressed Poland, and in Hungary, despite their best efforts, it was proven that nationalists in government can't always obscure their failures with patriotic ardor. Yet the predominance of sausage over nation, even if it defeats an unpalatable governing party, may also imply something unhealthy—a more generalized aversion to social solidarity, to all "we's," not just the nationalist or communist variety.

To raise this question from the left hardly makes one a Stalinist; but neither does it necessarily imply chauvinist virulence when raised from a nationalist perspective. In the world of Janos Kadar's "goulash communism," in the 1960s and after, the regime aimed to provide Hungarians with rising living standards; in return they were to leave public life in the hands of the party and eschew civic engagement. The consequence of this "social contract," comments Gyula Kodolanyi, was that "before 1989, Hungary was a fragmented, atomized society, in which any small or larger community coherence or sense of belonging was undermined. Some people call me a nationalist but I don't. However, if restoring national identity and reoccupying one's own history is a type of nationalism, that's not bad."

On its own grounds, this position, it seems to me, is understandable and legitimate. The real question is how history is reoccupied. Does one, for instance, perceive the communist decades simply as a black hole or a period that, however bad the means, changed and modernized the country? The SP and the SzDSz, whatever their differences, accepted modernity; that is surely one reason why they now find

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themselves in a coalition. In contrast, many Hungarian nationalists foundered on their attempts to fashion a postcommunist national vision that is fully modern and free of precommunist prejudices.

The MDF followed—or was perceived by many to follow—behavior patterns of precommunist aristocratic elites. Preoccupied with "Hungarianness," it never developed economic proficiency—such matters were considered "dirty work," as (socialist) political scientist Attila Agh notes. Also, the MDF engulfed itself in symbolic but destructive struggles, none addressing the matter of sausage. Party leaders fixated on the notion that their political woes were due to the media. The government began attacking respected television and radio figures even while seeking to deploy the media on behalf of nationalism.

This was a little too reminiscent of the old regime, and raised the unpopular prospect that the mass media might become as it was in the bad old days—ideological and dull. MDF ire was directed also at the foreign press for its coverage of the protracted struggle within the MDF over Istvan Csurka, a party vice president renowned for inflammatory, radical nationalism and anti-Semitism. The party eventually rid itself of Csurka, but it was a messy business, and for many in the MDF the nuisance was apparently the press, not Csurka. "Why is it that Csurka gets lots of media attention but not the problems of Hungarian minorities [in Slovakia and Romania]?" Geza Entz, Antall's secretary of state in charge of Hungarian minorities abroad, asked me. It is a common MDF complaint, but one that evades the issue—the politics and prejudices of a high official in a ruling party—and ignores the obvious: the foreign press corps in Budapest is large, while in Bucharest and Bratislava it is minuscule. Naturally there is more coverage of major events in Budapest.

MDF leaders apparently feared that ousting Csurka would damage them at the polls. This was arguable in 1990, but false in 1994. Running independently, Csurka's party was repudiated entirely by Hungarians; he failed to win a single seat.

The Fate of Magyar Minorities

Polls showed that the status of Magyar minorities beyond Hungary's borders, while an MDF passion, was not so for the public. And this passion was perceived as bellicosity by Hungary's neighbors. Hungary proper has 10.2 million citizens yet Antall declared himself "spiritual prime minister of fifteen million Hungarians," encompassing Hungarians across the borders. Even if MDF policy was unwise, the situation of these minorities raises real human rights issues. Very practical matters are at stake too: a large flight of Hungarians from Romania across the frontier would thoroughly destabilize Hungary.

The problem, in this century, begins with the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. Because it was a loser in World War I, two-thirds of Hungary was parceled out to its neighbors. Substantial numbers of Hungarians became citizens of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. In 1991–92, as Yugoslavia fractured, so too did the relative calm of Hungarians there, especially in the Serbian province of Vojvodina (where Hungarians are about 18 percent of the population) and in Croatia. Slovakia was once northern Hungary, and Slovak identity began to crystallize especially in the later nineteenth century, largely in reaction to efforts to "Magyarize" the region. Still, Slovaks might have eventually assimilated had not Czechoslovakia been formed after World War I. Now, newly sovereign Slovakia needs to establish its own authority, and this raises questions for the country's large Hungarian minority, 600,000 in a population of 5,270,000. The Hungarians advance proposals for extensive cultural autonomy (so extensive that they unsettle sympathetic Slovak liberals).

Meciar's ouster in March and the SP victory in Budapest dramatically improved the atmosphere. "I do not believe that the [Hungarian] minorities stand to gain more rights from an increase in tension with these countries," Gyula Horn declared, adding that he was premier of the population of Hungary alone. He expressed his willingness to sign bilateral treaties with Slovakia and Romania confirming the present borders and became the first

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Hungarian premier to pay a state visit to Bratislava. All this, however, was before the Slovak elections.

Webs of Suspicions

In Romania, the party of President Ion Iliescu is dependent for its parliamentary majority on the National Unity Party of Gheorge Funar. This xenophobe, the mayor of the Transylvanian city of Cluj, ran third in the presidential elections of 1992. Funar is partial to racist vulgarity—in his view Hungarians "have barbarian genes"—and is devoted to ridding Cluj, 20 percent of whose 300,000 inhabitants are Hungarian, of Magyar influence. Last summer his preoccupation was the removal from the town center of a statue of King Matthias Corvinus, a medieval Hungarian monarch. His chosen means was "archeology." Excavation under the statue would reveal Roman ruins, demonstrating that Romanians were in Transylvania first, for Romanian nationalists deem themselves descendants of ancient Romans.

One cannot, of course, reduce Romanian nationalism to Funar. Still, nationalism is so strong that Colin Anastasiu, a thoughtful Liberal parliamentarian, remarks, "No politician in Romania today can afford to be non-nationalist." Iliescu and his postcommunist party (which has, with scant warrant, decreed itself "social democratic") have used nationalist motifs, including sanctioning the rehabilitation of World War II dictator Ion Antonescu, to strengthen their legitimacy. "They lack other non-nationalist means to legitimize—no great economic success," notes Anastasiu. There has been some economic reform but it has been slow and, especially outside the capital, life is difficult.

Romania wants to be part of Europe, and ties with the United States have improved since Clinton became president. In an important gesture, Bucharest supported the embargo against Serbia, a traditional friend and trading partner. This aimed to demonstrate that "we are a reliable partner in hard times," says Cornel Codita, one of Iliescu's advisers. At the same time, he notes Romanian "dismay and disbelief at the international community's inability to deal with [Yugoslavia]—a sense that the international community can't deal with crises and you must be able to help yourself." The distrust is unmistakable, and becomes intense when one raises the question of the Hungarian minority.

Romania's population is 23 million, and some 1.8 million are Hungarians (about 7 percent). The least one can say is that the two communities don't speak the same language. Discord covers terrain familiar to ethnic conflicts: historical counter-claims, struggles over language rights, disputes over control of education, and local administration. "There simply isn't a common understanding of the same problems," complains Anne-Marie Biro, the international affairs secretary of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (DAHR), which has twenty-nine deputies and twelve senators in Romania's legislature. The DAHR proposes cultural and administrative autonomy for Hungarians, and education is a principal concern. The party took particular umbrage at a recent draft education law, which it maintains is discriminatory.

"We don't equate the concepts of state and nation," says Bela Marko, the articulate parliamentary leader of the DAHR. "We are Romanian citizens but we belong to the Hungarian nation whose historical and cultural traditions we share. In Eastern Europe, in this century alone, the same regions have belonged to several countries at different times. A community can't change its national identity when its citizenship is changed."

Might not Romanians object that extensive autonomy will lead to separatism? And that it will undermine efforts to fashion democratic civic solidarity in a country where democratic political culture, to the extent that it exists, is fragile? "The state is not a matter of individuals alone but also of communities—ethnic, religious, regional. What we want is for the Hungarian community to make the decisions in matters directly affecting it. Where there are national minorities, the concept of majoritarian democracy has limits and must be complemented by a principle of subsidiarity. Simply put, there is a danger that the majority can

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exclude a minority and become a majority dictatorship."

Hungarian desires for political in addition to cultural autonomy stimulate Romanian anxieties. Romanians, Codita told me, are troubled lest Hungarians create a system of apartheid to insulate themselves. The DAHR doesn't just want schooling in the Hungarian language for Hungarians, it wants a separate educational system, from kindergarten through university. Such measures, Romanians fret, could be a prelude to demands for border changes. "The fear that there might later be an effort to reopen Trianon," Codita says, "is the bottom line."

Such worries were reinforced by MDF rhetoric in Budapest and qualifications in Hungarian statements about borders. When I asked Marko to address this, he affirmed that "we accept Romania as a sovereign state," but he would only declare the border issue "nonfunctional" since most Hungarians live in central Transylvania, away from frontiers. (Hedging on borders ended in Budapest when Horn became premier.) Moreover, nuance often vanishes when the Hungarians address Romanian politics. Marko insisted that the difference between Iliescu and Funar is only rhetorical since "they both maintain the idea of the nation-state." Means may vary, he reckoned, but the goal is the same, an identity of demos and ethnos that implies no future for a Hungarian minority. However, as a Western embassy source in Bucharest pointed out to me, Iliescu wants Funar removed, tried to be "somewhat accommodating" on the education bill (he was opposed by MPs in his own party) and covets improved relations with the West—"the last thing he needs is ethnic rioting."

Still, it would be difficult to dispute Anne-Marie Biro's protest that "Most Romanians have trouble with the notion of difference within the country." Few Romanians seem to have pondered—perhaps they don't want to ponder—what it means to accept a large minority in the country, especially one that feels besieged. Codita, for instance, though acknowledging that "there is no such thing as a nation-state in today's world" and accepting, in principle, some form of cultural autonomy for Hungarians, was adamant: Romania must be a "unitary state."

In practice, this means that administration is highly centralized (the model is the old French system), with local power, including elected municipal governments, overseen by appointees of the interior ministry. A state, Codita upheld, "organizes the life of an entire community," and consequently "a state should have one education system." When I suggested that enhancing the powers of local government might be a good idea in general and could alleviate some Hungarian concerns in particular, I was informed that I was "imposing American ideas not relevant to Romania." And he insisted that the real problem was not discrimination against Hungarians but manipulative Hungarian politicians who didn't represent their community. He could not explain why, if this were the case, the DAHR received 80 percent of the vote of the Hungarian minority in the last elections.

Uncertainties

Ethnic strife, often ferocious, long preceded communism in Eastern and Central Europe. More time is needed to make a full assessment of communism's impact on national identities; we are still too close to the upheavals. More time is not needed to identify the worst postcommunist scenario, Yugoslavia, and to recognize that this catastrophe was due, in part, to the mistaken confidence of Tito's elite that ethnic animosities could be dissolved without nurturing democratic political culture. One hopes that specters of Bosnia stalk politicians in Eastern and Central Europe when they address ethnic issues. Their ability to temper, if it is impossible to resolve, nationalist conflicts will be an essential gauge of the region's future.

Material progress will be a necessary condition for tempering nationalism. Yet fostering democratic political culture and material progress will, at best, entail slow, knotty processes because the region's economic woes are grave. The ex-communists came to power as pragmatists promising an easier future; they

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have not yet faced the limits on how much sausage *they* can put on the national plate.

True, they may make solidaristic appeals if times become difficult but, for the moment, it seems that economic liberalization has diluted social solidarity along with nationalistic impulses—all while expanding disparities between rich and poor. If ex-communists are unable to cope, political spaces can widen for nationalist-populist demagogy. The fate of these uncertain democracies may depend on finding a way to foster social solidarity in a time of economic anxiety without animating destructive forms of nationalism. □

Notes

[1] Maurice Glasman, "The Great Deformation: Polanyi, Poland, and the Terrors of Planned Spontaneity" (*New Left Review*, May/June 1994).

[2] The comments by Szomolanyi are from her *Eastern Central Europe 2000: Transformations of Slovak Society*, a report commissioned by the European Union, and from a conversation I had with her in Bratislava in July 1994.

[3] My presentation of Kuron's ideas mixes quotes from his pamphlet with elaborations he made to me in an interview on August 9, 1994 in Warsaw.

[4] I wish to thank Gyorgy G. Markus for bringing this survey to my attention. Details are in *Magyarorszag Politikai Evkonyve* (Political Year Book of Hungary), (Budapest, 1993), pp. 621–40.

Jonathan Fox and Luis Hernández

LESSONS FROM THE MEXICAN ELECTIONS

Mexico's 1994 presidential election was supposed to bring both clean elections and the political comeback of the left. Instead, Mexico escaped the worldwide wave of democratization one more time. The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD), which includes center-left ex-members of the ruling party and most of both the old and new lefts, had hoped that 1994 would be a replay of Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas's surprise 1988 triumph. His official 1988 tally of 31 percent was an unprecedented challenge to the ruling party-state, and many observers suspect that he actually won. In 1994, not only did the candidate of the government's Party of the Institutional Revolution (PRI) clearly come in first with almost 50 percent, but Cárdenas slipped far behind to third place with 17 percent, trailing the center-right National Action party's (PAN) 26 percent. The PRI swept the congressional races as well, preventing the rubber-stamp legislature from becoming an effective counterweight to presidential power.

New York Times editorials spoke of the reformers' victory over old-fashioned hard-liners within the ruling party, but promarket technocrats are not necessarily political reformers. The new president, Ernesto Zedillo, certainly has promarket credentials, but he made a pact with his party's hard-line "dinosaurs" in order to get elected. Indeed, the murder of the ruling party's number two official reminded Mexicans that the dinosaurs are far from extinct. The ruling party's true political reformers were trying to separate the party from the state, but have had little impact so far.

In retrospect, it is not surprising that the

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ruling party won the August elections. Its advantages of money, media, and coercion were overwhelming, and it did not take any chances. The PRI's victory can be explained by simply noting that the opposition was deeply divided. In no "founding election" in transitions to democracy has a divided opposition won over entrenched authoritarian incumbents. One Mexican opposition leader, PRD president Porfirio Muñoz Ledo, made hopeful pre-election comparisons to the Chilean plebiscite vote against Pinochet, but he neglected to recall that the democratic opposition only won there because of its unusual unity across the political spectrum—and even then Pinochet got 43 percent of the vote. But all this does not explain why the PRI won by such a large margin.

Many Mexican political analysts explain the PRI sweep with the "voto de miedo" hypothesis—the "fear vote." This phrase actually conflates two distinct arguments that need to be disentangled—a macro version and a micro version. In the argument's macro version, fear is associated with the widespread perception that a transition to a non-PRI government, even to an opposition party as tame as much of PAN, would provoke instability. And thanks to the skill with which the progovernment television managed images of the Chiapas rebellion and the assassination of presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, political change was widely associated with open-ended violence and economic crisis. This fear of instability was actually well founded, in the sense that the threat of a capital strike by big business in response to an opposition victory was very real. The head of the Mexican Bankers' Association made explicit threats of capital flight in the press. On the political side, the Colosio murder and the apparent lack of a serious investigation were understood by many as a message that "premature" democratization would not be tolerated by the hard-line elements within the regime. Voter fears of change were explicitly encouraged by the semi-official media monopoly, with television ads where a child was asked, "Why are you crying?" "Because I'm afraid." "And why are you afraid?" "Because my father is afraid. . . ." Against this backdrop, Ernesto Zedillo campaigned as the "peace candidate."

The micro version of the "fear vote" interpretation of the PRI's margin of victory focuses on how *individual* voters feared reprisals for supporting the opposition. This approach involves taking a "voter's eye view" of the process, looking at the combination of carrots and sticks that the ruling party-state used to try to influence individual decisions. It involves unpacking the election in terms of geography, class, and ethnicity. Most notably, the electoral process in rural areas was qualitatively different from the urban process. There were dramatic differences in the nature of the electoral process between Mexico City and the northern states, and the southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Veracruz. It is not difficult to guess where most of the United States observers were. Progovernment foreign observers proclaimed this Mexico's cleanest election ever, but that was not saying much.

The nonpartisan Mexican election watchdog coalition Civic Alliance brought together non-governmental organizations and individual citizens from center right to center left, fielding over twelve thousand Mexican election observers and hundreds of international election "visitors," as they were officially called. The Civic Alliance observed a statistically representative stratified sample of over 1,800 polling places for their national quick count (out of more than 90,000). They did not find any single obvious "smoking gun" in terms of election law violations; instead, they found a diverse array of mechanisms that tarnished and distorted the process in different ways, so diverse that they found it impossible to quantify the overall effect on the electoral outcome. As a result, the Civic Alliance did not challenge the PRI presidential victory, but it did claim that the sum total of irregularities, whatever that was, certainly affected the PRI's margin of victory, many congressional races, and the Chiapas governor's race that took place the same day.

The Alliance's main emphasis was to produce a "quick count," in case the ruling party

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tried to change the results after the voting, and to document election law violations on the voting day itself. They were not able to address the flagrant violations of weak campaign spending laws, nor did they have the capacity to check the validity of the controversial official voter rolls. The Alliance election observation effort was able to quantify the percentage of polling places affected by election law violations, though not the number of votes presumably affected by the violations. Here are a few of their conclusions, limited to procedural problems visible on election day:

- In 7.7 percent of polling places observed, voters without credentials were permitted to vote.
- In 7.5 percent of polling places, the indelible ink was not applied to all voters.
- In 3.8 percent of polling places, people with ink were allowed to vote.
- In 4.8 percent of polling places, the ink was easily removed.
- In 13.1 percent of polling places, ballots were annulled for only one party (presumably an opposition party). Where this occurred, the average share of ballots annulled was 9 percent of the total.
- In 69.5 percent of polling places observed, voters with credentials were not listed on the rolls, and were therefore not allowed to vote. When the Alliance's numbers were first published it had not yet quantified the number of people denied the vote, but in the latest report it calculated an average of only four voters turned away per polling place—much less than earlier PRD estimates.
- The secret ballot was violated in 38.6 percent of polling places observed nationwide. This figure ranged from 25.4 percent in the largest cities to over 51 percent in rural areas nationally, reaching 68 percent statewide in Chiapas, 58 percent in Veracruz, 55 percent in Michoacán, and 53 percent in Oaxaca.
- Direct pressures on voters were witnessed in 25 percent of the polling places, rising to 35.6 percent in rural areas. Most of these pressures were actually exercised *before* election day, and therefore not systematically measured by observers. The most obvious vote-buying tool was the remarkably blatant political manipulation of millions of government crop subsidy checks distributed only days or weeks before the election—through a program designed to buffer the political cost of the NAFTA-related fall in the price of corn.

There are limits to the Alliance data on the violation of ballot secrecy. The Alliance was not able to quantify what *fraction* of voters were denied ballot secrecy in each polling place. One can only guess as to what happened in those Chiapas polling places where independent observers were not present. To sum up the point about the second version of the "fear vote" interpretation, many rural voters, especially in indigenous regions, had good reasons to fear individual reprisals if they voted for the opposition. Reprisals were also possible regardless of ballot secrecy, as in the rural community of Jaltenango la Paz, Chiapas, far from the region in revolt, where a local schoolteacher—the municipal leader of the PRD—was shot down while bicycling to town in September, apparently because the PRD won in his district.

The one place where the micro version of the "fear vote" explanation might have affected the actual election outcome (and not just the margin of PRI victory) was in the Chiapas governor's race (the only governor's race that coincided with the national election). In Chiapas, the main opposition candidate was one of the few on the PRD ticket who actually had a broad popular following. Amado Avendaño is a public interest lawyer and journalist who had worked for years with indigenous groups, and is trusted by both the Church and the Zapatistas. He defined himself as a candidate from civil society and was drafted to run on the PRD ticket because of the Chiapas crisis (the Mexican government does not allow nonparty candidacies). On the campaign trail, Avendaño barely survived a suspicious head-on collision in which three associates were killed.

The PRI's margin of victory in the governors' race was 50 percent to 35 percent. This means that Avendaño got twice the percentage Cárdenas did nationally, in spite of the lack of media access and the widespread violation of basic elec-

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toral freedoms in most of the state. We'll never know who would have won a clean race for governor, but it is clear that the national government's unwillingness to ensure that the process was clean and credible in Chiapas makes continued instability and political violence in the state very likely. The number of troops in Chiapas reportedly doubled after the election, and the Zapatistas went on red alert. The national Civic Alliance concluded that "the case of Chiapas is most worrisome because of the high level of conflict in the region. Although the Civic Alliance did not observe the local elections . . . the high levels of irregularities in the federal elections also affected the elections for governor. We are therefore facing a provocation that affronts the millions of Mexicans who hoped . . . that this election would be a means to achieve peace in Chiapas."

By fall, the government and the Zapatistas had still not reached a negotiated settlement. Bishop Ruiz came out with a balanced proposal, but the government attached conditions that ended up weakening the bishop, who in turn came under renewed attack from anti–liberation theology elements within the church. Zedillo's transition team assigned low-level politicians to the negotiation process, while sending threatening military signals to the Zapatistas. Perhaps some kind of negotiated solution can be reached, but we may look back and see the 1994 governor's race as a historic missed opportunity for peaceful political change in Mexico's most authoritarian region.

At the national level, the presidential election suggests several lessons for future movements for electoral democracy in Mexico. First and foremost is the importance of building a broad multiparty coalition behind the most credible candidate possible. There are precedents—pluralist coalitions behind democratic "good government" candidates for governor at the state level—but so far Mexican politics has not produced a unifying figure at the national level.

Second, the partisan opposition needs to sink stronger roots in society to offset the ruling party's media domination and extensive network of clientelist controls. Both the PRD and the PAN have well-organized bases in a few regions and states. But the PAN is known as the "asphalt party," never leaving the paved road network, while the PRD has not been able to engage with many of the non-party grass-roots movements that one would think are its natural constituencies. The PRD has such weak links with its own base that the leadership decided to choose its 1994 congressional candidates through backroom negotiations rather than open party primary elections. Before the selection process, the PRD promised half of its proportional representation seats to nonparty candidates from civil society, but these candidates tended to end up on the bottom half of the list, guaranteeing that party leaders would get most of the seats actually won.

Third, the PRD needs to find campaign strategies that convince the electorate that it has the capacity to go beyond criticism and govern effectively. The PAN's gradualist strategy has paid off politically, in that it has learned how to govern in practice at the municipal and state levels. The PRD, in contrast, has governed many small towns but has won only one state capitol and no governorships. Elements of the 1994 campaign strategy may also have backfired. For example, when PRD propaganda called for clean elections to avoid post-electoral political unrest, the government claimed this was a threat rather than an argument. In the aftermath of the Chiapas rebellion and Cárdenas's meeting with the Zapatistas, the regime's image managers proved especially adept at painting the PRD rather than the government itself as the source of violence (almost three hundred PRD activists have been murdered since the party was founded five years ago).

Finally, the election revealed a gaping political chasm between the intelligentsia and much of the electorate. Across the spectrum, Mexico City elites were surprised at the PRI's high margin of victory. In the aftermath of organized civil society's successful veto of the government's military response to the Chiapas rebellion, expectations of change were high. Many prodemocracy activists—mostly urban middle-class—felt predestined to win, and then the people let them down. For many Mexican citizens, however, grass-roots mobilizations

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around local issues like social programs and municipal elections are often more engaging than national elections. The PRD has a weak track record in helping citizens to solve local problems, while that is precisely the PRI's speciality: solving specific material problems in exchange for political subordination. Local political battles are also widely seen as worth the risks they involve because there is more of a chance of winning something. National politics, in contrast, is quite remote; the president seems all-powerful and arbitrary, while few congressional representatives channel constituent demands upward. For most citizens, the progovernment television monopoly is the main link to national politics, and television is an arena where the PRD was unable to take advantage even of the little space available. Instead, Cárdenas's campaign strategy emphasized old-fashioned rallies in the plazas, which are fine for energizing the party faithful but not so good at reaching the fearful or undecided.

The shock of the 1994 election results catalyzed a major rethinking on the left end of the democratic opposition. Remarkably, the PRD emerged from the process much more unified than before. Radical groups inside and outside the party advocated trying to block Zedillo's accession to power with open-ended mass protest, but they generally failed to inspire much support. The Zapatistas found themselves more isolated than they expected and took a prudent posture, focusing on the illegitimacy of the Chiapas governor's election. The dominant groups in the PRD took the position that Mexico faced a national crisis and were willing to engage in a broad multiparty dialogue over future political reform. Meanwhile, the second assassination of a top ruling party official struck fear in the hearts of Mexico's political opposition: if that is how ruling party factions solve their internal disputes, then no one on the outside is safe.

Most indicative of the regime's crisis of governability—transcending the electoral arena—is that both murdered national leaders bridged reformist and hard-line factions within the ruling party (and therefore may have been especially threatening to corrupt vested interests). It remains to be seen whether incoming President Zedillo will cave in to his authoritarian political allies or whether he will be willing to negotiate the next stage in Mexico's slow and far from steady political transition. □

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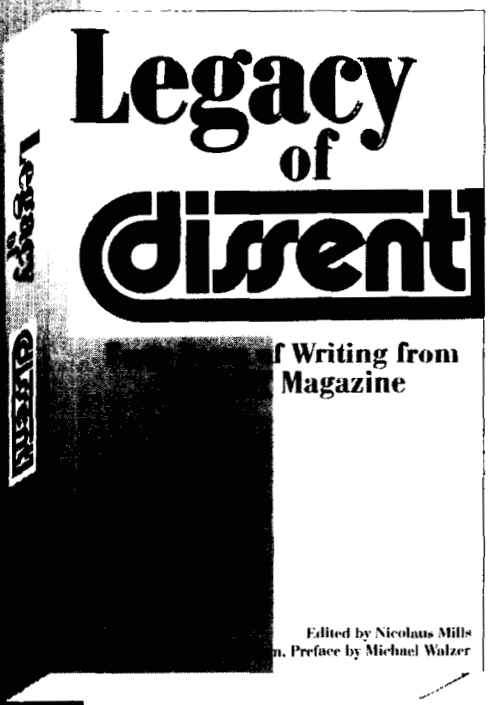

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Michael Walzer

THE POLITICS OF RESCUE

To intervene or not?—this should always be a hard question. Even in the case of a brutal civil war or a politically induced famine or the massacre of a local minority, the use of force in other people's countries should always generate hesitation and anxiety. So it does today among small groups of concerned people, some of whom end up supporting, some resisting interventionist policies. But many governments and many more politicians seem increasingly inclined to find the question easy: the answer is *not*! Relatively small contingents of soldiers will be sent to help out in cases where it isn't expected that they will have to fight—thus the United States in Somalia, the Europeans in Bosnia, the French in Rwanda. The aim in all these countries (though we experimented briefly with something more in Mogadishu) is not to alter power relations on the ground, but only to ameliorate their consequences—to bring food and medical supplies to populations besieged and bombarded, for example, without interfering with the siege or bombardment.

This might be taken as a triumph for the old principle of nonintervention, except that the reasons on which the principle is based, which I will rehearse in a moment, do not appear to be the reasons that move governments and politicians today. They are not focused on the costs of intervention or, for that matter, of nonintervention to the men and women whose danger or suffering poses the question, but only on the costs to their own soldiers and to themselves, that is, to their political standing at home. No doubt, governments must think about such things: political leaders have to maintain their domestic support if they are to act effectively abroad.* But they must also *act effectively abroad* when the occasion demands it, and they must be able to judge the urgency of the demand in the appropriate moral and political terms. The ideology of the cold war once provided a set of terms, not in fact always appropriate to the cases at hand, but capable of overriding domestic considerations. In the aftermath of the cold war, no comparable ideology has that capacity. The question, to intervene or not? gets answered every day, but with no sign that the judgments it requires are actually being made.

What About "Humanitarian Intervention"?

I am going to focus on the arguments for and against "humanitarian intervention," for this is what is at issue in the former Yugoslavia, the Caucasus, parts of Asia, much of Africa. Massacre, rape, ethnic cleansing, state terrorism, contemporary versions of "bastard feudalism," complete with ruthless warlords and lawless bands of armed men: these are the acts and occasions that invite us, or require us, to override the presumption against moving armies across borders and using force inside countries that have not threatened or attacked their neighbors. There is no external aggression to worry about, only domestic brutality, civil war, political tyranny, ethnic or religious persecution. When should the world's agents and powers (the United Nations, the European Community, the Pan American Alliance, the Organization of African Unity, the United

* I will not consider here what they have to do, in a democracy, to act legally or constitutionally abroad—another question, for another time.

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States) merely watch and protest? When should they protest and then intervene?

The presumption against intervention is strong; we (on the left especially) have reasons for it, which derive from our opposition to imperial politics and our commitment to self-determination, even when the process of self-determination is something less than peaceful and democratic. Ever since Roman times, empires have expanded by intervening in civil wars, replacing "anarchy" with law and order, overthrowing supposedly noxious regimes. Conceivably, this expansion has saved lives, but only by creating in the process a "prison-house of nations," whose subsequent history is a long tale of prison revolts, brutally repressed. So it seems best that people who have lived together in the past and will have to do so in the future should be allowed to work out their difficulties without imperial assistance, among themselves. The resolution won't be stable unless it is locally grounded; there is little chance that it will be consensual unless it is locally produced.

Still, nonintervention is not an absolute moral rule: sometimes, what is going on locally cannot be tolerated. Hence the practice of "humanitarian intervention"—much abused, no doubt, but morally necessary whenever cruelty and suffering are extreme and no local forces seem capable of putting an end to them. Humanitarian interventions are not justified for the sake of democracy or free enterprise or economic justice or voluntary association or any other of the social practices and arrangements that we might hope for or even call for in other people's countries. Their aim is profoundly negative in character: to put a stop to actions that, to use an old-fashioned but accurate phrase, "shock the conscience" of humankind. There are some useful, and to my mind justified, contemporary examples: India in East Pakistan, Tanzania in Uganda, Vietnam in Cambodia. Interventions of this sort are probably best carried out by neighbors, as in these three cases, since neighbors will have some understanding of the local culture. They may also, however, have old scores to settle or old (or new) ambitions to dominate the neighborhood. If we had more trust in the effectiveness of the United Nations or the various regional associations, we could require international or at least multilateral endorsement, cooperation, and constraint. I will consider this possibility later on. It might be a way of controlling the economically or politically self-aggrandizing interventions of single states. For now, though, the agent-of-last-resort is anyone near enough and strong enough to stop what needs stopping.

But that's not always easy. On the standard view of humanitarian intervention (which I adopted when writing *Just and Unjust Wars* almost twenty years ago), the source of the inhumanity is conceived as somehow external and singular in character: a tyrant, a conqueror or usurper, or an alien power set over against a mass of victims. The intervention then has an aim that is simple as well as negative: remove the tyrant (Pol Pot, Idi Amin), set the people free (Bangladesh), and then get out. Rescue the people in trouble from their troublers, and let them get on with their lives. Help them, and then leave them to manage as best they can by themselves. The test of a genuinely humanitarian intervention, on this view, is that the intervening forces are quickly in and out. They do not intervene and then stay put for reasons of their own, as the Vietnamese did in Cambodia.

But what if the trouble is internal, the inhumanity locally and widely rooted, a matter of political culture, social structures, historical memories, ethnic fear, resentment, and hatred? Or what if the trouble follows from state failure, the collapse of any effective government, with results closer to Hobbes's than to Kropotkin's predictions—not quite a "war of all against all" but a widely dispersed, disorganized, and murderous war of some against some? No doubt, there are still identifiable evil-doers, but now, let's say, they have support at home, reserves, evil-doers in waiting: what then? And what if there are overlapping sets of victims and victimizers, like the Somalian clans and warlords or, perhaps, the religious/ethnic/national groupings in Bosnia? In all these cases, it may well happen that the quick departure of the intervening forces is followed immediately by the reappearance of the conditions that led to intervention in the first place. Give up the idea

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of an external and singular evil, and the "in and out" test is very hard to apply.

We are extraordinarily dependent on the victim/victimizer, good guys/bad guys model. I am not sure that any very forceful intervention is politically possible without it. One of the reasons for the weakness of the United Nations in Bosnia has been that many of its representatives on the ground do not believe that the model fits the situation they have to confront. They are not quite apologists for the Serbs, who have (rightly) been condemned in many United Nations resolutions, but they do not regard the Serbs as wholly "bad guys" or as the only "bad guys" in the former Yugoslavia. And that has made it difficult for them to justify the measures that would be necessary to stop the killing and the ethnic cleansing. Imagine that they took those measures, as (in my view) they should have done: wouldn't they also have been required to take collateral measures against the Croats and Bosnian Moslems? In cases like this one, the politics of rescue is certain to be complex and messy.

It is much easier to go into a place like Bosnia than to get out, and the likely costs to the intervening forces and the local population are much higher than in the classic humanitarian interventions of the recent past. That is why American politicians and military officers have insisted that there must be an exit strategy before there can be an intervention. But this demand is effectively an argument against intervening at all. Exit strategies can rarely be designed in advance, and a public commitment to exit within such and such a time would give the hostile forces a strong incentive to lie low and wait. Better to stay home than to intervene in a way that is sure to fail.

Where the policies and practices that need to be stopped are widely supported, sustained by local structures and cultures, any potentially successful intervention is not going to meet the "in and out" test. It is likely to require a much more sustained challenge to conventional sovereignty: a long-term military presence, social reconstruction, what used to be called "political trusteeship" (since few of the locals—at least, the locals with power—can be trusted), and along the way, making all this possible, the large-scale and reiterated use of force. Is anyone ready for this? The question is especially hard for people on the left who are appalled by what happened or is happening in Bosnia, say, or Rwanda, but who have long argued, most of us, that the best thing to do with an army is to keep it at home. Even those who supported humanitarian interventions in the past have emphasized the moral necessity of a rapid withdrawal, leaving any ongoing use of force to indigenous soldiers.

Now this moral necessity seems to have become a practical, political necessity. Hence the general search for a quick fix, as in President Clinton's proposal (never very vigorously pursued) to "bomb the Serbs, arm the Bosnians." I would have supported both these policies, thinking that they might produce a local solution that, however bloody it turned out to be, could not be worse than what was happening anyway. But what if the quick fix failed, brought on an ever more brutal civil war, with no end in sight? Would we be ready then for a more direct and long-lasting military intervention—and if so, with what sort of an army? Under whose direction? With what weapons systems, what strategy and tactics, what willingness to take casualties and to impose them?

Putting Soldiers at Risk

This last question is probably the crucial one in making intervention increasingly difficult and unlikely. It is very hard these days, in the Western democracies, to put soldiers at risk. But humanitarian interventions and peacekeeping operations are first of all military acts directed against people who are already using force, breaking the peace. They will be ineffective unless there is a willingness to accept the risks that naturally attach to military acts—to shed blood, to lose soldiers. In much of the world, bloodless intervention, peaceful peacekeeping is a contradiction in terms: if it were possible, it wouldn't be necessary. Insofar as it is necessary, we have to acknowledge the real status and function of the men and women whom we send to do the job. Soldiers are not like Peace Corps volunteers or Fulbright scholars or USIA musicians and lecturers—

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who should not, indeed, be sent overseas to dangerous places. Soldiers are destined for dangerous places, and they should know that (if they don't, they should be told).

This is not to say that soldiers should be sent recklessly into danger. But acknowledging their status and function poses the question that has to be answered before they are sent anywhere, at the moment their mission is being defined: is this a cause for which we are prepared to see American soldiers die? If this question gets an affirmative answer, then we cannot panic when the first soldier or the first significant number of soldiers, like the eighteen infantrymen in Somalia, are killed in a firefight. The Europeans in Bosnia, it has to be said, didn't even wait to panic: they made it clear from the beginning that the soldiers they sent to open roads and transport supplies were not to be regarded as *soldiers* in any usual sense; these were grown-up Boy Scouts, doing good deeds. But this is a formula for failure. The soldiers who were not soldiers became, in effect, hostages of the Serbian forces that controlled the roads: subject to attack if anyone challenged that control. And the European governments became in turn the opponents of any such challenge.

Should we put soldiers at risk in faraway places when our own country is not under attack or threatened with attack (not Maine or Georgia or Oregon) and when national interests, narrowly understood, are not at stake? I am strongly inclined, sometimes, to give a positive answer to this question (whether volunteers or conscripts should bear these risks is too complicated to take up here). The reason is simple enough: all states have an interest in global stability and even in global humanity, and in the case of wealthy and powerful states like ours, this interest is seconded by obligation. No doubt, the "civilized" world is capable of living with grossly uncivilized behavior in places like East Timor, say—offstage and out of sight. But behavior of that kind, unchallenged, tends to spread, to be imitated or reiterated. Pay the moral price of silence and callousness, and you will soon have to pay the political price of turmoil and lawlessness nearer home.

I concede that these successive payments are not inevitable, but they come in sequence often enough. We see the sequence most clearly in Hannah Arendt's description of how European brutality in the colonies was eventually carried back to Europe itself. But the process can work in other ways too, as when terrorist regimes in the third world imitate one another (often with help from the first world), and waves of desperate refugees flee into countries where powerful political forces, not yet ascendent, want only to drive them back. For how long will decency survive *here*, if there is no decency *there*? Now obligation is seconded by interest.

As I have already acknowledged, interest and obligation together have often provided an ideology for imperial expansion or cold war advance. So it's the political right that has defended both, while the left has acquired the habit of criticism and rejection. But in this post-imperial and post–cold war age, these positions are likely to be reversed or, at least, confused. Many people on the right see no point in intervention today when there is no material or, for that matter, ideological advantage to be gained. "What's Bosnia to them or they to Bosnia/that they should weep for her?" And a small but growing number of people on the left now favor intervening, here or there, driven by an internationalist ethic. They are right to feel driven. Internationalism has always been understood to require support for, and even participation in, popular struggles anywhere in the world. But that meant: we have to wait for the popular struggles. Liberation should always be a local initiative. In the face of human disaster, however, internationalism has a more urgent meaning. It's not possible to wait; anyone who can take the initiative should do so. Active opposition to massacre and massive deportation is morally necessary; its risks must be accepted.

Enduring the Intervention

Even the risk of a blocked exit and a long stay. These days, for reasons we should probably celebrate, countries in trouble are no longer viewed as imperial opportunities. Instead, the metaphors are ominous: they are "bogs" and

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"quagmires." Intervening armies won't be defeated in these sticky settings, but they will suffer a slow attrition—and show no quick or obvious benefits. How did the old empires ever get soldiers to go to such places, to sit in beleaguered encampments, to fight an endless round of small, wearying, unrecorded battles? Today, when every death is televised, democratic citizens (the soldiers themselves or their parents) are unlikely to support or endure interventions of this kind. And yet, sometimes, they ought to be supported and endured. Consider: if some powerful state or regional alliance had rushed troops into Rwanda when the massacres first began or as soon as their scope was apparent, the terrible exodus and the cholera plague might have been avoided. But the troops would still be there, probably, and no one would know what hadn't happened.

Two forms of long-lasting intervention, both associated in the past with imperial politics, now warrant reconsideration. The first is a kind of trusteeship, where the intervening power actually rules the country it has "rescued," acting in trust for the inhabitants, seeking to establish a stable and more or less consensual politics. The second is a kind of protectorate, where the intervention brings some local group or coalition of groups to power and is then sustained only defensively, to ensure that there is no return of the defeated regime or the old lawlessness and that minority rights are respected. Rwanda might have been a candidate for trusteeship; Bosnia for a protectorate.

These are arrangements that are hard to recommend and that would, no doubt, be hard to justify in today's political climate. The lives they saved would be speculative and statistical, not actual lives; only disasters that *might have* occurred (but how can we be sure?) would be avoided. This is rescue-in-advance, and it will be resisted by those local elites who believe that the need for rescue will never arise if they are allowed to take charge—or who are prepared to take charge at any cost. The very idea of a "failed state" will seem patronizing and arrogant to a group like, say, the Rwandan Patriotic Front, which hasn't yet had a chance to succeed. Nor is the history of trusteeships and protectorates particularly encouraging: the contemporary horror of the Sudanese civil war, for example, is no reason to forget the oppressiveness of the old "Anglo-Egyptian Sudan." Nonetheless, given what is now going on in Southeast Europe and Central Africa, morally serious people have to think again about the human costs and benefits of what we might call "standing interventions." Haiti today [October 1994] might provide a test case, since the U.S.-led, multinational force serves as the protector of the restored Aristide government—and that role is likely to be an extended one.

Which States Should Intervene?

Who will, who should, do the "standing" and pay the price of the possible but often invisible victories? This is no doubt the hardest question, but it isn't, curiously, the one that has attracted the most attention. The public debate has had a different focus—as if there were (as perhaps there once were) a large number of states eager to intervene. So the question is: who can authorize and constrain these interventions, set the ground rules and the time frame, worry about their strategies and tactics? The standard answer on the left, and probably more widely, is that the best authority is international, multilateral—the UN is the obvious example. Behind this preference is an argument something like Rousseau's argument for the general will: in the course of a democratic decision procedure, Rousseau claimed, the particular interests of the different parties will cancel each other out, leaving a general interest untainted by particularity. As with individuals in domestic society, so with states in international society: if all of them are consulted, each will veto the self-aggrandizing proposals of the others.

But this isn't a wholly attractive idea, for its result is very likely to be stalemate and inaction, which cannot always be the general will of international society. It is also possible, of course, that some coalition of states, cooperating for the sake of shared (particular) interests, will have its way; or that stalemate will free the UN's bureaucracy to pursue a program of its own. Multilateralism is no guarantee of anything. It may still be better than the unilateral initiative of a single powerful state—though in the exam-

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ples with which I began, India, Vietnam, and Tanzania, local powers, did not do entirely badly; none of their interventions, with the possible exception of the last, would have been authorized by the UN. In practice, we should probably look for some concurrence of multilateral authorization and unilateral initiative—the first for the sake of moral legitimacy, the second for the sake of political effectiveness—but it's the initiative that is essential.

Can we assume that there are states ready to take the initiative and sustain it? In Somalia, the United States made the undertaking but was unprepared for the long haul (perhaps the long haul was not called for in this case: no one is reporting today on conditions in the Somalian countryside, so we don't know). Bosnia provides a classic example of a serial rejection of the undertaking: everyone deplored the war and the ethnic cleansing; no one was prepared to stop them—and no one is prepared now to reverse their effects. Similarly, the African states and the Western powers stood by and watched the Rwandan massacres. (Remember the biblical injunction: "Do not stand idly by the blood of thy neighbor." The Rwandans, it turned out, had no local or global neighbors until they were dying by the thousands on foreign soil and on television.)

It seems futile to say what is also obvious: that some states should be prepared to intervene in some cases. It is probably equally futile to name the states and the cases, though that is what I mean to do, on the principle that even futility is improved when it is made less abstract. The European Community or, at least, the French and British together (the Germans were disqualified by their aggression in World War II) ought to have intervened early on in Bosnia. The Organization of African Unity, with the financial help of Europeans and Americans, should have intervened early on in Rwanda. (I concede that the Nigerian-led intervention in Liberia is not an entirely happy precedent, though it has probably slowed the killing.) The United States should have intervened in Haiti months before it did, though the probably necessary protectorate would best have been undertaken by a coalition of Central American and Caribbean states. It is harder to say who should have stopped the killing in southern Sudan or East Timor: there isn't always an obvious candidate or a clear responsibility. It is also hard to say how responsibility passes on, when the obvious candidates refuse its burdens. Should the United States, as the world's only or greatest "great power" be nominated agent-of-last-resort? With the transportation technology at our command, we are probably near enough, and we are certainly strong enough, to stop what needs stopping in most of the cases I have been discussing (though not in all of them at once).

But no one really wants the United States to become the world's policeman, even of-last-resort, as we would quickly see were we to undertake the role. Morally and politically, a division of labor is better, and the best use of American power will often be to press other countries to do their share of the work. Still, we will, and we should be, more widely involved than other countries with fewer resources. Sometimes, the United States should take the initiative; sometimes we should help pay for and even add soldiers to an intervention initiated by somebody else. In many cases, nothing at all will be done unless we are prepared to play one or the other of these parts—either the political lead or a combination of financial backer and supporting player. Old and well-earned suspicions of American power must give way now to a wary recognition of its necessity. (A friend comments: you would stress the wariness more if there were a Republican president. Probably so.)

Many people on the left will long for a time when this necessary American role is made unnecessary by the creation of an international military force. But this time, though it will obviously come before the much heralded leap from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom, is still a long way off. Nor would a UN army with its own officers, capable of acting independently in the field, always find itself in the right fields (that is, the killing fields). Its presence or absence would depend on decisions of a Security Council likely to be as divided and uncertain as it is today, still subject to great-power veto and severe budget-

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ary constraints. The useful role played by the UN in Cambodia (organizing and supervising elections) suggests the importance of strengthening its hand. But it wasn't the UN that overthrew Pol Pot and stopped the Khmer Rouge massacres. And so long as we can't be sure of its ability and readiness to do that, we will have to look for and live with unilateral interventions. It is a good thing, again, when these are undertaken by local powers like Vietnam; most often, however, they will depend on global powers like the United States and (we can hope) the European Community.

Despite all that I have said so far, I don't mean to abandon the principle of nonintervention—only to honor its exceptions. It is true that right now there are a lot of exceptions. One reads the newspaper these days shaking. The vast numbers of murdered people; the men, women, and children dying of disease and famine willfully caused or easily preventable; the masses of desperate refugees—none of these are served by reciting high-minded principles. Yes, the norm is not to intervene in other people's countries; the norm is self-determination. But not for *these* people, the victims of tyranny, ideological zeal, ethnic hatred, who are not determining anything for themselves, who urgently need help from outside. And it isn't enough to wait until the tyrants, the zealots, and the bigots have done their filthy work and then rush food and medicine to the ragged survivors. Whenever the filthy work can be stopped, it should be stopped. And if not by us, the supposedly decent people of this world, then by whom? □

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Michael Lind

WHY INTELLECTUAL CONSERVATISM DIED

The collapse of intellectual conservatism in America has been as complete as it has been swift. Consider a few contrasts. In 1984, the leading conservative spokesman in the media was George Will; by 1994, it was Rush Limbaugh. The basic concerns of intellectual conservatives in the eighties were foreign policy and economics; by the early nineties they had become dirty pictures and deviant sex. In the early 1980s, the *Public Interest* was publishing scholarly analyses of public policy, from a moderate conservative point of view; by the early nineties, it was publishing a potted commentary on the sexual practices of the ancient Greeks and Chinese by a California radio talk show host, Dennis Prager. The *American Spectator*, which in the eighties had striven for respectability by publishing neocon scholars, had by 1994 turned into a semipornographic tabloid of a kind familiar in Britain. Barry Goldwater was a conservative hero in the early eighties; now he is a pariah, considered too far to the left because he supports an end to legal and social discrimination against gay Americans. In the eighties, Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus authored a thoughtful monograph on the importance of intermediate institutions; by the nineties, Berger was ranting in *Commentary* about the persecution of smokers, and Neuhaus (a convert to Catholicism) was publishing articles in his magazine, *First Things*, denouncing Darwin and defending the theory that today's animals descend from honeymoon couples aboard Noah's Ark. In the 1980s, conservatives claimed to be defending the color-blind civil rights idealism of Martin Luther King, Jr.; in 1994, Charles Murray has revived old theories about the innate inferiority of average Latinos and blacks compared to whites in his new book (written with the late Richard Herrnstein), *The Bell Curve*: "Latino and black immigrants are, at least in the short run, putting some downward pressure on the distribution of intelligence. . . . The shifting ethnic makeup by itself would lower the average American IQ by 0.8 per generation."

I was present at the destruction of intellectual conservatism over the past several years, as executive editor of the *National Interest*, published by Irving Kristol, as a research assistant for William F. Buckley, Jr., and as a contributor to such conservative intellectual journals as *Commentary*, the *Public Interest*, and *National Review*. What I observed convinces me that the conventional explanations for the demise of American conservatism as a serious intellectual force are wrong.

It is a mistake, for example, to attribute the death of intellectual conservatism to the end of the cold war. The loss of the Soviet enemy did not cause the right to crack up; on the contrary, the differences among "paleoconservatives," *National Review* conservatives, and neoconservatives have actually diminished in the years since 1989 (as the former center-right has enthusiastically adopted the far right's "culture war"). What is more, it is *only* in foreign policy that there have been any interesting or

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rigorous debates among conservatives (chiefly in the pages of Owen Harries's *National Interest*). The foreign-policy half of the conservative brain remained alert long after the other hemisphere was clinically dead.

The decline of intellectual conservatism has had less to do with geopolitics than with domestic politics. By far the most important factor has been a process well under way before 1989: the growing power within the Republican party of the Protestant right.

The two main varieties of mainstream conservatism, from the founding of *National Review* in 1955 to the disastrous Houston convention of 1992, were Buckley-type fusionism ("fusing" free-market economics and a sort of high-church traditionalism) and neoconservatism. These corresponded more or less with the Catholic right and the Jewish right. Not all Buckleyites were Catholic (though the non-Catholics tended to convert, like Russell Kirk and Lew Lehrman) and not all neocons were Jewish; even so, the difference between fusionists and neocons was as much ethnocultural as ideological.

For several decades, the chiefly Protestant and heavily southern and western mass constituency of conservatism had, as its spokesmen, Catholic and Jewish intellectuals, most of them Ivy League-educated Northeasterners. This was no accident, as the Marxists say; the success of Buckley and his allies in discrediting the John Birch Society in the early 1960s effectively wiped out the major rival for the leadership of conservative white Protestant Americans. Though the Birchers probably reflected the views of the conservative base more faithfully than people like Buckley or Kristol, the leaders of the Catholic right and the Jewish right became the only *respectable* spokesmen for conservatism.

The disparity in social origins between the conservative base and the conservative elite became even more pronounced in the 1980s, which saw a great influx of Thatcherite British journalists and policy analysts and other foreigners into the upper ranks of American conservatism. One Englishman, Stuart Butler, became the chief social policy thinker of the Heritage Foundation; another, John O'Sullivan, became editor of *National Review* (making the United States, to my knowledge, the only democracy in which the editor of the leading conservative journal is not himself a citizen of the country). A Belgian immigrant, Arnaud de Borchgrave, edited the conservative daily, the *Washington Times* (itself controlled by Korean would-be messiah Reverend Sun Myung Moon). Increasingly, conservative leaders like Bill Buckley and Irving Kristol socialized with foreign media tycoons like Rupert Murdoch (Australian) and Conrad Black (Canadian) and Greco-British-American trophy wife Arianna Stassinopolous Huffington, a "Minister of Light" in California cult leader John-Roger's Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness (MSIA). The complaint of "paleoconservatives" that their movement was being taken over by opportunistic (and in many cases weird) foreigners was not completely without foundation.

Sooner or later, it was inevitable that the conservative masses would find leaders who did not speak with funny upper class or foreign accents. Indeed, this came to pass after 1988, when Pat Robertson succeeded in converting his presidential campaign organization into the Christian Coalition. Here, for the first time since World War II, was the stable infrastructure of a Protestant right with real clout. The institutions and the leaders of the older Catholic and Jewish conservatives suddenly became superfluous. Pat Robertson spoke the language of the conservative masses more authentically than Bill Buckley or Irving Kristol (to say nothing of Her Majesty's loyal subject John O'Sullivan). Who needs the Philadelphia Society when you can have the Christian Coalition? Who needs *Firing Line* when you can watch *The 700 Club* and Rush Limbaugh?

Now that the hitherto silent majority of white evangelical Protestant conservatives has found its own leaders, the Catholic and Jewish (and mainline Protestant and secular) conservatives are at a loss. They have lost an empire, and not yet found a role. Some of them, like R. Emmett Tyrrell, have more or less abandoned serious politics altogether for sensational and lucrative tabloid journalism. A more typical response—exemplified by William Bennett and

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William Kristol—has been to seek out a new role for Catholic and Jewish intellectuals as middlemen between the uncouth fire-and-brimstone Protestant evangelicals and the world of serious journalism, policy, and scholarship. The task of the go-between is to formulate a compromise language, a set of ambiguous code words, which can win the fundamentalists over to the GOP without alarming the moderate majority. Thus, "pro-family" as a euphemism for "antigay," and "cultural elite" as a code word for what George Wallace more pungently called "eggheads" and "pointyheads." But this is image-laundering, not thinking. Indeed, the careers of Bennett and the younger Kristol are part of the history, not of American thought, but of American public relations.

The eagerness with which most intellectual conservatives have embraced this degrading new role as image consultants for Protestant fundamentalists took me and many other former conservatives by surprise. A few years ago, I rather naively expected the *National Review* conservatives and the neocons to close ranks, to prevent the takeover of the Republican party by the fundamentalists, whose leaders (not their voters) would be sent packing like the Birchers. Remember, at the beginning of the decade there were signs of a purge of the far right by the center-right. Midge Decter accused Russell Kirk of anti-Semitism, and Bill Buckley more subtly suggested that Patrick Buchanan was guilty of the same offense. The "paleoconservatives" of *Chronicles* broke off and formed their own far-right organization, the John Randolph Society. Neocons railed against the conservatism of "the fever swamps." Only a few years later, however, the fusionists and neocons had themselves adopted "fever swamp" themes, like the so-called "culture war" and the claim that homosexuals are trying to destroy family, religion, and Western civilization. After Bush lost in 1992, the center-right quickly became indistinguishable from the far right.

In hindsight, I failed to realize just how corrupt the conservative leadership had become. I don't mean personally corrupt; as individuals, the conservatives are no better or worse than intellectuals or activists of other political persuasions. (They are, perhaps, more hypocritical, though: the conservative leadership is full of secular Jews recommending Christianity for other people, closeted homosexuals condemning "alternative lifestyles," and divorcees and adulterers praising marriage and family.) The corruption of the conservatives has involved, rather, the sacrifice of intellectual standards.

One reason is nepotism. Anyone spending any time in conservative circles in Washington or New York in the past decade has constantly run across what Charlotte Allen dubbed the "minicons," the children or nieces or nephews of eminent conservatives—little Podhoretzes and Kristols, as well as junior Buckleys and Weyrichs. An intellectual movement that hopes to endure must constantly replenish itself by recruiting the best outside talent and relentlessly purging its ranks of mediocrities. Instead, the leaders of conservatism turned the magazines and institutions of the right, like the Moonie-controlled *Washington Times* and various think tanks, into patronage dumps for their offspring and in-laws. The best jobs tended to go to direct lineal descendants, minicons proper; a second tier of positions was occupied by friends of the minicons (usually, their roommates at Harvard or wherever). The bottom tier tended to be reserved for a mudsill class of wealthy and dense Young Republicans. It is no accident that the most impressive of the younger conservative intellectuals, Dinesh D'Souza, was an outsider, an immigrant from India. Even he owed his rise in part to the fact that he was a friend, at Dartmouth, of Ben Hart, son of long-time *National Review* editor Jeff Hart. Irving Kristol's son William, Dan Quayle's former chief of staff, has been trying to position himself as heir to the leadership of the movement.

Hereditary political aristocracies are not unknown to the left of center—think of the various Kennedys and Galbraiths. The neoconservative intellectual movement might have survived this sacrifice of meritocracy to family values. It could not, however, survive its corruption by excessive partisanship in the service of the Republican party.

The conservatives, one can argue, tried to take over the wrong party after 1955. In many ways, the Democratic party would have made a more

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natural home for conservatives than the Republicans. This is not as crazy as it sounds. The discrediting and political demise of the southern segregationists in the 1960s left a void on the right wing of the Democratic party that a nonracist conservative movement (anticipating the Democratic Leadership Conference) might have filled. Conservatism would have had to make its peace with the New Deal—but that should not have been all that difficult for a Catholic-influenced American version of European Christian Democracy, with a strong base in the unionized working classes of the Northeast (who tend to be more conservative in morals than the business and professional classes). First-generation conservative thinkers like Russell Kirk, Willmoore Kendall, and James Burnham had little use for laissez-faire capitalism and were comfortable with the idea of a conservative welfare state. Conservatism would have had far more influence as the theory of the dominant wing of the dominant party, and defending congressional prerogatives against presidential Caesarism (a staple of conservative theory in the 1950s) would have been more compatible with conservative constitutionalism than apologizing for the imperial prerogatives of a succession of Republican presidents.

If conservatizing the Democrats was ever an option, it was foreclosed by the "Draft Goldwater" movement, by Nixon's southern strategy, and the defection, one by one, of the Democrats who remained conservative to the GOP. As the conservative movement and the Republican party became identified, conservative doctrine began to be cut and stretched to accommodate the short-term needs of Republican coalition strategy. The debates over first principles that made *National Review*-type conservatism lively in the 1950s and 1960s, and neoconservatism interesting in the 1970s, gave way to united-front solidarity on a growing number of issues important to this or that wing of the Republican party, from tax cuts to the outlawing of abortion.

The point of no return, in my view, came with the adoption of support for supply-side economics as a litmus test for true-blue conservatism. No first-rate economist took the supply-siders seriously—even Milton Friedman scoffed at them. Ominously, for the first time, a theory that most serious intellectuals on the right did not believe became the official doctrine of the conservative movement, because it served the narrow short-term interests of an important Republican constituency, the rich.

Once critical thinking had been abandoned as a threat to the program of massive tax cuts for the super-rich, further sacrifices of rigor and empiricism became easy. By the mid-eighties, conservatives were dismissing very serious objections to the practicability of space-based strategic defenses as "liberal" propaganda (as though there were "liberal" physics and "conservative" physics). As standards of evidence sank, conservative journals opened their pages to previously marginal ideas and thinkers. *National Review* debated the question of whether Shakespeare's plays had been written by the Earl of Oxford. In the once-moderate *Public Interest*, editor Irving Kristol published a rave review of a book by Richard Epstein, a legal theorist who argues that most federal laws against racial discrimination are unconstitutional—a view formerly associated with the John Birch Society rather than the neocons. Another *Public Interest* author argued that the solution to the crime problem is for everyone to own a gun.

Then there is "creation science." The silence of serious conservative intellectuals in the face of fundamentalist campaigns to force public schools to teach the book of Genesis in geology and biology classes has completely discredited the claim of conservatives to be defenders of objectivity and empirical scholarship against politicization. How can intellectual conservatives credibly attack Afrocentrists for distorting history while passing in silence over efforts to teach American children that the dinosaurs lived with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and drowned in Noah's Flood? Even worse, *National Review, Commentary,* and *First Things* have actually run essays attacking evolutionary theory and espousing "guided evolution," "creation science," and similar nonsense. Who would have thought that, at the end of the twentieth century, the remnants of the New York Intellectuals would be refighting

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the Scopes Trial—from the point of view of William Jennings Bryan?

Kookiness has been joined by complacency. Instead of exploring plausible conservative solutions to genuine problems, the right began to deny that problems existed at all. What pollution problem? What overpopulation problem? What secondhand smoke problem? What falling American wages? What health care crisis? Conservatism—which historically has tended to be pessimistic—in recent years has become strangely Panglossian, adopting, as it were, the motto of *Mad* magazine's Alfred E. Neumann—"What, me worry?"

One aspect of conservative complacency has been a growing toleration of the vicious lunatic fringe. The "no enemies to the right" policy has been symbolized in recent years by annual conservative "summits" in Washington—small, private dinners bringing together people like Bill Buckley, Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Charles Krauthammer, and the far-right activist Paul Weyrich. At one of these meetings, Weyrich circulated a proposal (which I have held and read) that the federal government secretly lace illegal drugs with substances like rat poison and release them into the black market. Drug addicts would be more easily identified and punished, Weyrich reasoned, if, in public, they went into sudden convulsions. None of the other conservative leaders at the meeting walked out in protest, or insisted that this man be ostracized. On the contrary, at subsequent summits Weyrich has been welcomed by the same conservatives who criticize the NAACP for meeting with Farrakhan.

Such latitudinarianism has become the norm. Bill Buckley recently appeared on television as an ally of Pat Robertson, who in print has accused the Council on Foreign Relations—an organization to which Buckley belongs, and to which he successfully nominated me—of being a secret instrument of Satan's plot to destroy America and condemn most of humanity to eternal damnation. Call me sensitive, but I *resent* that.

By the late 1980s, the conservative movement, drifting into crankiness and complacency under the control of a small number of elderly men, was in desperate need of a revolutionary renovation from within the ranks, as well as an invigorating transfusion of outside talent. At the very least, there needed to be a searching reconsideration of first principles, a questioning of dogmas like supply-side economics and hypocrisies like the lip service paid to criminalizing abortion.

Such a free and frank debate within conservatism, however, was made impossible by the dependence of the journals of the right on foundation money. One by one, every leading neoconservative publication or think tank over the past decade has come to depend on money from a few foundations—Olin, Smith-Richardson, Bradley, Scaife. Many were started in the first place by seed money from the foundations. Inevitably, this has promoted groupthink. The foundations are the chief reason that *Commentary* sounds more and more like the *New Criterion*, which sounds so much like the new *Public Interest*.

It is not that there is some centralized conspiracy imposing a party line. By and large, the program officers of the foundations, though partisan, sincerely believe in debate among conservatives. They do not deliberately impose an orthodoxy. They do not have to. The editors tend to censor themselves, for fear of appearing "liberal" and losing that critical annual grant. There are a few honorable exceptions—the *National Interest* and the *American Scholar* continue to put the life of thought above the life of the party. For the most part, though, instead of boldly attacking falsehoods wherever they are found, conservative editors tend to print only what they believe will confirm the prejudices of the program officers.

The addiction to foundation dollars has reinforced the disastrous "no enemies to the right" policy. The last thing the foundations want is for one set of grantees to criticize the policy views or intellectual standards of other grantees. The major conservative foundations ended their support of *Chronicles* a few years back when its editors got into a spat with Richard John Neuhaus and the neocons—a lesson that has not been lost on other conservative grantees.

In addition to reinforcing groupthink, the addiction to foundation money has also led to the

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lowering of intellectual standards. After all, if you, the editor, turn down a piece by a mediocrity or crackpot who is a friend of a program officer, this could have consequences. Once too many Republican hacks start moving into a journal or a think tank, serious thinkers and their audiences go elsewhere. A cycle of decline is set in motion. With foundation money comes the implicit imperative to avoid questioning partisan pieties—but this very avoidance of controversy sends intellectuals away, even as it attracts true believers (the truer they are, the crankier). As third-rate zealots gradually replace first-rate thinkers and intelligent readers, the beleaguered editor places the blame for the decline of his journal's prestige on the "liberals," the "media elite," the "cultural elite"—anyone but himself and his sponsors.

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In this way, bit by bit, a number of once-interesting intellectual journals on the right have degenerated into newsletters for Chamber of Commerce Republicans, creationists, and elderly curmudgeons denouncing the music that young people listen to nowadays.

Eventually there may be a revival of serious thought on the political right, but this seems unlikely for at least a generation. For the foreseeable future, American conservatism will be defined by the fundamentalist/tabloid right, with its program of making centrist and liberal Christians, Jews, and secular Americans, working women, nonwhite Americans, gay men and lesbians, and intellectuals scapegoats for the serious problems afflicting American society (problems for which the conservatives I have worked with for a decade have no plausible answers). The new Radical Right of Pat Robertson and Pat Buchanan, which sets the agenda for trimmers like William Bennett and William Kristol, has more in common with the pre-World War II right of Father Coughlin and William Randolph Hearst than with the intellectual conservatism of the decades after the war. The Radical Right has no arguments, only hatreds.

Today, as always, it is possible to be an American intellectual who is politically conservative. But conservatism as an intellectual movement in the United States is dead. □

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Kathryn Abrams

THE REASONABLE WOMAN

Sense and Sensibility in Sexual Harassment Law

Is sexual harassment understood differently by men and women? If so (as seems likely), whose understanding should set the standard for court decisions? These questions, which lawyers have argued about for almost a decade, reached the general public with the Senate testimony of Anita Hill. But the ensuing debate—between partisans of a universal common sense and those who see perceptions of sexual harassment as gender-differentiated—has thus far produced more heat than light. Although the debate has offered a fascinating window on movements within feminist theory, it has rarely yielded sufficient guidance for the judgment of actual cases.

The central challenge of sexual harassment litigation has been to define when harassment becomes sufficiently pervasive to create a "hostile environment." The Supreme Court accepted the idea of hostile-environment sexual harassment in 1986, but its pronouncements on the question of pervasiveness have been frustratingly vague. Sexual harassment violates the law when it is "severe or pervasive [enough] to alter the conditions of plaintiff's employment and create an abusive working environment," or when it "unreasonably interferes with [plaintiff's] work performance and creat[es] a hostile, intimidating or offensive" environment. This proliferation of adjectives has raised more questions than it has answered. Is an "intimidating" or "offensive" environment different from an "abusive" one? Do certain kinds of conduct contribute more to the creation of such environments than others? Compounding these difficulties has been a question of perspective or vantage point in assessing the alleged abuse. Courts are frequently confronted with a plaintiff who argues that certain conduct starkly interferes with her work performance, and a defendant who argues that the same conduct is trivial, episodic, jocular, or nonintrusive. How can judges find an independent ground on which to stand in assessing these allegations?

The first solution offered by the courts was to assess the claims of the plaintiff from the perspective of the "reasonable person." This approach offered several advantages. First, it had the legitimizing pedigree of a long history in the law: courts had assessed the conduct of torts defendants from the standpoint of the "reasonable man" and later the (gender-neutral) "reasonable person" to determine whether they had met the required duty of care toward plaintiffs. Second, the specification of a vantage point distinct from that of the actual plaintiff offered reassurance to employers; it protected them from liability arising from idiosyncratic claims. Finally, the resort to a vantage point ostensibly accessible to any observer held the promise of reducing the growing confusion over the "pervasiveness" standard. In the long tradition of jurists who have sought procedural answers to festering substantive disputes, proponents of the "reasonable person" test appealed to perspective—in this case, a kind of universal common sense—to mitigate controversy over "pervasiveness."

But as feminist advocates soon made clear, the "reasonable person" standard only complicated the controversy. Their challenge to this standard reflected the confluence of two

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intellectual movements within feminist theory. The first was a tendency toward gender differentiation, characteristic of both cultural and radical feminisms. These movements resisted the gender-neutrality characteristic of equality theories, which had described women as substantially similar to men. Cultural feminists argued that this move understated and undervalued the biological and social ways in which women differed from men. Radical feminists charged that the focus on women's conformity to male norms diverted attention from a system of power relations through which male characteristics become normative. Both groups bridled at the possibility that women's perspectives would be described in terms simultaneously applicable to men.

The second influential movement was the challenge to objectivist accounts of knowledge. Feminist writers assailed the notion of "truth" as something "out there," external to the position of the observer, accessible by certain neutral observational methods. The status of legal norms or social understandings as "true" or "neutral," and the legitimation of certain methods for gaining access to them, are incidents of power, they argued. Resisting such power meant exposing the extent to which understandings of social relations are shaped by social location. And it meant exposing those viewpoints considered to be neutral or true as another example of a partial perspective, distinguished only by the ability of its adherents to make their vision normative.

Resistance also required a challenge to objectivist modes of knowledge production. One important strategy in this effort has been a re-valuation of nondominant ways of knowing about the world. Some scholars, influenced by cultural feminism, have valorized "ways of knowing" they describe as characteristic of women: reasoning from personal experience is one example; choosing contextual reasoning over abstract principle is another. Other scholars, retaining a focus on the power dimension, have claimed an "epistemic advantage" for those at the bottom of reigning hierarchies. The oppressed, in this view, enjoy a double source of knowledge: their experience in a society built around the understandings of the privileged familiarizes them with those perspectives, but gives them a view from a subordinated social location that the privileged lack.

These diverse insights combined to fuel a critique of the "reasonable person" standard. Feminist advocates pointed first to the gendered origins of the standard. The "reasonable person" had its beginnings in the "reasonable man," a fellow who "takes the magazines at home and in the evening pushes the lawn mower in his shirtsleeves." (*Hall v. Brooklands Auto Racing Club*, 1933, quoting "unnamed American author.") As this early twentieth century elaboration reveals, what was being presented as universal common sense was in fact the sense of a particular, socially located person: one whose perspective was shaped by his freedom to relax with his magazines at home, and to enjoy sovereignty over his physical—and familial—domain. Moreover, the assertion of a single valid perspective on sexual harassment belied the gender differentiation that many kinds of research were beginning to reveal. Social scientists like Barbara Gutek pointed to a sharp divergence in the way men and women view sexualized conduct in the workplace. Men were likely to see sexualized words or gestures as flattering, indicative of long-term interest, and not threatening to professional progress; women were likely to associate them with manipulation, exploitation, or threat, and to see them as imperiling their professional prospects. Analyses like that of Catharine MacKinnon offered an explanatory social context for these differences. Women workers' experience of marginality within the workplace, and sexual vulnerability in and outside it, caused them to view the sexual inflection of work relations with a fearfulness unlikely to be shared by their male counterparts. Finally, feminists worried that the "reasonable person" standard might confirm the (largely male) judiciary in its unreflective assurance that it understood the phenomenon of sexual harassment. Judges might view it as authorizing them to decide cases on the basis of their own intuition: the same "common sense" that had marked the administration of the "reasonable person" standard in tort law—and the same "common sense" that

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had normalized the practice of sexual harassment in the first place.

All of these factors suggested the preferability of a "reasonable woman" standard. This formulation would explicitly challenge notions of a universal perspective. It would characterize the evaluation of harassment, like the experience of harassment itself, as a phenomenon strongly differentiated on the basis of gender. The gender-specific language would place male judges on alert that they could no longer rely on their unexamined intuitions. The "reasonable woman" standard would replace those intuitions with a perspective that promised a radical revision of workplace conditions. Yet beyond the notion that such a perspective would "take harassment seriously"—viewing it neither as a right of the employer, nor as a harmless, if vulgar, form of male amusement—there was little explicit discussion of what insights or sensibilities it entailed.

As the eighties closed, this approach began to be embraced by the federal courts. In a landmark case called *Ellison v. Brady*, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held that sexual harassment should be evaluated from the perspective of the "reasonable woman." In *Ellison* a woman received a series of letters from a colleague she barely knew, describing his love for and continuous surveillance of her. The trial court had shrugged off the behavior as a "pathetic attempt at courtship," but the Court of Appeals disagreed. It stressed the importance of considering the conduct from the standpoint of a "reasonable woman": "a sex-blind reasonable person standard," the court noted, "tends to be male biased and tends to systematically ignore the experiences of women." It held that, viewed from the perspective of a "reasonable woman," receiving "long, passionate, disturbing" letters from a person one barely knew represented sufficiently pervasive and severe harassment to create a hostile environment.

The court recognized the need, in such a context, to elaborate the differences in perspective between men and women. And it took a few steps in that direction, noting that conduct considered unobjectionable by men might be offensive to women, and stating that women's vulnerability to sexual assault gave them a "stronger incentive" to be concerned about sexual behavior in the workplace. But the largely passive stance of the *Ellison* court toward the elaboration of perspectival differences is expressed in its "hope that over time men and women will learn what conduct offends reasonable members of the opposite sex."

Both the strengths and the drawbacks of the *Ellison* opinion were underscored in the revolution catalyzed by Anita Hill. Women's denunciation of senators who failed to "get it" stressed the gendered character of perceptions of sexual harassment, and the need for a gendered standard of evaluation. The "reasonable woman" standard was, in fact, adopted by several additional courts in the wake of the Senate hearings. But the growing concern of even well-intentioned men with the "new rules of engagement" pointed to the need for explicit discussion of the determinants of gender difference in this area. Both men and women sought greater clarity about the ways in which their perceptions of sexual harassment diverged, and the "hope" for mutual understanding expressed by *Ellison* failed to fill the bill.

As the call for a fuller elaboration of women's perspectives continued, the "reasonable woman" standard began to be challenged from an unexpected quarter: the feminist movement itself. There were several sources of this attitudinal sea change. Some feminists worried that unitary images of female difference could be manipulated by hostile forces. Images of women that emphasized care or connection could be used to explain the absence of women from more competitive jobs—a link that was made in the notorious *Sears* litigation. "Women's ways of knowing" could be used to reinforce stereotypes of the intuitive or irrational woman. Others challenged accounts of strong gender differentiation as essentialist and potentially oppressive. A range of "anti-essentialist" feminists, led by lesbians and women of color, argued that unitary depictions of women replicated the false and exclusory universalism of the gender-neutral approach. Some asked whether the

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divergent social circumstances of women could possibly yield the same knowledge: how could modes of reasoning shaped by the domestic context, for example, apply to women who did not remain in the home or live within conventional families? Others argued that the unity presented in depictions of "women's experience" derived not from homogeneity but from erasure. Comparatively privileged white middle class women—through solipsism or strategic exclusion—had eclipsed the experiences of less privileged subgroups.

These insights made many feminists wary of the gathering momentum behind the "reasonable woman" standard. They worried that the "reasonable woman," like other paradigmatic "women" of feminist theory, would turn out to be white, middle class, and heterosexual. Others asked whether simply living as a woman assured a particular perspective on sexual harassment. The disparagement of sexual harassment claims by female "mavericks" like Judge Maryanne Trump Berry gave some advocates pause. The "reasonable woman" might simply free women judges to resort to *their* intuitions, in ways that were not uniformly promising to female claimants. Moreover, the standard might fail to prompt the desired response from male judges—permitting them to indulge their own, biologized visions of female difference. So there was a growing division among feminist advocates over the "reasonable woman" standard, with some calling for a further elaboration or differentiation of the standard, and others seeking a return to gender neutrality or a rejection of all "reasonableness" criteria.

These differences among feminists were brought to the fore by the Supreme Court's second case on hostile environment sexual harassment: *Harris v. Forklift Systems* (November 9, 1993). That case presented the question of whether plaintiffs must demonstrate "serious psychological injury" in order to win their cases. But the court also agreed to consider whether hostile environment claims should be reviewed under a gendered or gender-neutral standard. Those feminist advocates who filed amicus briefs with the court were frankly divided on the question of the standard: the Employment Law Center and Equal Rights Advocates endorsed a "reasonable woman" standard, while Catharine MacKinnon and the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund argued that "reasonableness" standards, whether gender-specific or gender-neutral, reinforce stereotypes and distract the court from the primary issue—the conduct of the defendant. The decision, when it came, was anticlimactic. Although the court resoundingly rejected the psychological injury requirement, it resolved the question of standard in less than a sentence, stating that the court should review plaintiff's claim according to the perspective of the "reasonable person," with no elaboration and no explanation of its decision.

It is hard to know what conclusions to draw from this cryptic affirmation of gender-neutrality. It suggests that a court that has displayed studied disinterest in group-based distinctions is not prepared to embrace a standard that underscores—and perhaps risks instantiating—gender difference. Some subset of male judges will now, no doubt, resort to their own, unschooled intuitions in evaluating sexual harassment cases. But has the court scuttled the entire project of introducing a new, non-dominant sensibility about sexual harassment into adjudication? I see no reason to draw so negative a conclusion. The first goal of the "reasonable woman" standard was to emphasize the gendered character of sexual harassment and prevent resort to a "common sense" that was likely to preserve the status quo. The second goal was to permit access to a distinct set of perspectives that would open the way for a transformation of workplace norms. Though the courts have made only limited progress in fleshing out these perspectives, their elaboration is essential to reshaping the perceptions of judges, and ultimately of those who structure the workplace. This second, and arguably more important, task can still be performed under a "reasonable person" standard.

My own argument begins with the anti-essentialist insight that neither modes of knowing nor particular bodies of knowledge are inextricably linked to biological set or social gender. There

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are things that women are more likely to know by virtue of having lived as women. There are practices—such as those involving devaluation or sexualization—to which they are likely to have a heightened sensitivity by virtue of having experienced them, heard about them repeatedly, or seen them applied to other women. But this likelihood cannot be collapsed into inevitability: some women have had few of the experiences that produce such sensitivity; others respond with indifference or denial; women who are aware of discriminatory practices may perceive them in different ways. Just as being female does not guarantee transformative perceptions of sexual conduct in the workplace, being male does not exclude the possibility of having, or developing, them. If perceptions of sexual harassment do not depend solely on biology, life experience, or gender-specific modes of knowing, but rather on varied sources of information regarding women's inequality—if such perceptions, in other words, are a matter not of innate common sense but of informed sensibility—then they can be cultivated in a range of women and men. The "reasonable person" standard, properly elaborated, might be a vehicle for the courts to play a role in this educative process. The reasonableness term, as Martha Chamallas has suggested, could be interpreted to mean not the average person, but the person enlightened concerning the barriers to women's equality in the workplace.

What remains is the uncompleted task of elaborating the determinants of this "reasonable" perspective. What should legal decision makers—and actors in the workplace—know about women, work, and sex that would help them assess claims of sexual harassment in ways that transform the present, often oppressive assumptions of the workplace? I would emphasize four kinds of information that could be offered by expert testimony or by counsel in framing their clients' claims. Some might be included in judges' instructions, when these cases are tried to juries. They reflect the experience not of any paradigmatic woman but of diverse groups of women, in and out of the workplace.

(1) The first kind of information concerns barriers that women have faced, and continue to face, in the workplace. Women are newcomers to many work settings; the work they have traditionally performed has been poorly paid, socially undervalued, and situated on the lower rungs of occupational hierarchies dominated by men. Women's entry into nontraditional jobs has been met with outright hostility, expressed through conduct verging on physical intimidation. Once inside the workplace, women have been met by glass ceilings, by ostensibly neutral criteria that (barely) conceal gender-based judgments, by biologized assumptions about their ability to perform particular jobs.

Even in settings where women have not faced overt barriers, they have been confronted with reminders that workplaces were not designed to meet their needs: persistent demographic disparities, machinery constructed to male needs, failures to accommodate women's disproportionate parental responsibilities. As a result, many women feel that they are marginal participants in the workplace, that their hold on their job or on the respect of their superiors is tenuous and subject to factors not within their control. Sexualized conduct in the workplace may interact with all of these factors, inducing a sense of precariousness or professional threat that it would not necessarily induce in a man.

(2) The second kind of information decision makers require concerns the role of sexualized treatment in thwarting women in the workplace. The meanings assigned to sex by women in this culture are various, and include physical pleasure, emotional connection, and opportunities for self-discovery and self-expression. Yet among the most familiar meanings, themes of intimidation, objectification, and devaluation are readily discernible. High rates of sexual assault by strangers and acquaintances have led many women to feel that their sexuality makes them physically vulnerable. The "myth of the black rapist" has produced a complicated legacy for black women, in which fears about physical security vie with suspicions of racial exploitation. Even in their less overtly threatening guises, sexual depictions of women may be trivializing, suggesting that women find their primary purpose in male attention, titillation or satisfaction.

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It is largely these negative cultural themes that echo in sexualized treatment in the workplace. Sexual aggression, including violent forms of sexual assault, has been repeatedly used by employers and fellow employees to resist women's entry into blue-collar and other nontraditional workplaces. A male employer who propositions a female subordinate may be expressing a genuine interest, but it is also possible that he is asserting a combination of sexual and economic power, which reminds the woman of her social inequality. Even where the motivation is more ambiguous, the threatening or devaluative resonance may persist. Sexual epithets and targeted sexual talk, whatever their ostensible purpose, remind women that, despite their advancement to roles not technically defined by sex, they can still be treated as sexual objects or addressed in primarily sexual ways. The broader cultural backdrop to these forms of conduct needs to be made explicit, so that professedly well-intentioned men who defend sexual talk as harmless humor can understand that it may have connotations they do not see.

These elaborations of women's circumstances in many workplaces can, and have, been used to assist in the evaluation of sexual harassment claims. In *Lehmann v. Toys 'R' Us* (July 14, 1993), a New Jersey Supreme Court case decided days before *Harris*, Justice Marie Garibaldi pointed to women's historical marginality in the workplace and their vulnerability to sexualized abuse, to give content to a "reasonable woman's" perspective. These same factors, and those articulated below, could be used to explain a "reasonable person" standard as well.

The second two factors that courts should consider concern not the backdrop to sexual harassment but its consequences.

(3) Sexual harassment can produce a range of effects on the work lives of women. Although *Harris* has ruled out a requirement of psychological harm, many legal fact-finders still believe that harassment does not create a hostile environment unless women are rendered professionally nonfunctional. If a woman is able to drag herself to work and perform some acceptable version of her assigned tasks, decision makers—and employers—assume that the behavior has not reached an actionable level. Yet a statute that promises women an environment "free from discriminatory intimidation, ridicule, and insult" requires that fact-finders look further: there are many ways that sexual harassment can create impediments, even for the woman who continues to do her job. Propositions or touching from an unexpected source can make a woman fear sexual assault; sexual epithets may make her feel that she is being objectified. Both can affect not only her self-esteem but the conditions of her employment: they may impair her concentration or productivity, or undermine her confidence in herself as a worker.

Though sexualized treatment can affect the performance of women workers directly, many of its most far-reaching effects derive from its impact on her colleagues and associates. When a woman is addressed by her supervisor as if her most salient attributes were sexual, this may prevent other workers from viewing her seriously. Such impressions may affect evaluations or considerations for promotion. They may compromise the provision of assistance, training, or staff support, or may prevent her from developing the kinds of collegial relationships that facilitate progress in any employment setting. These varied impediments to job performance may have been what Justice Ginsberg had in mind when she stated, in her *Harris* concurrence, that sexual harassment makes it "harder for women to do their jobs" than it is for men. Judges should be aware of the range of effects that even sexualized talk can produce, in assessing the pervasiveness of alleged harassment.

(4) The final type of information that legal decision makers require is information about the responses of women workers to harassment. Provision of this information is, in a sense, defensive: demonstration of some particular response should not, after *Harris*, be necessary for a plaintiff; but information about the ways that many women respond to harassing behavior may prevent judges from relying on stereotyped expectations about victims' responses. Empirical studies of sexual harassment suggest that fewer than 20 percent of women who believe they have been

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harassed complain to authorities within the workplace, and even fewer leave their jobs. Most women handle the problem with some combination of levity (where the conduct assumes a jocular tone), conversational management, or avoidance. An individual victim's response to sexual harassment is described by psychologists as a function of many things besides the nature of the conduct. Even exposure to the same kinds of oppressive influences may produce different responses in different women. A woman's personality type and the particular coping mechanisms she uses to respond to adverse circumstances may have a major impact on her reaction. Women with strong support from family and friends may be able to weather harassment with less psychological strain than women who lack such resources. What is known about women workers, and workers more generally, suggests that their visible response to harassing conduct will be an unreliable gauge of the severity or the practical impact of the treatment. Providing fact-finders with this information places the individual victim's response in context, so as to prevent judges from "trying the victim" or neglecting more accurate indications of pervasive harassment they may have before them.

The court's embrace of the "reasonable person" standard is not an unequivocal step forward. It avoids promulgating falsely unifying images of women. But it also fails to jolt judges into recognition that their intuitive perspectives are not the only, or the preferable, vantage point on the claims before them. The challenge confronting feminist advocates is to provide this jolt by other means: not through the jarring, but so far unelaborated, mechanism of a gendered referent, but through illumination of those factors that have shaped women's responses to sexual harassment. If viewed as an invitation to offer concrete information about women's lives, the "reasonable person" standard may yet help legal decision makers to create a less oppressive workplace. □

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Richard Rorty

MOVEMENTS AND CAMPAIGNS

The following essay was first presented at a memorial conference for Irving Howe held at the City University of New York in April 1994 and then, in a revised form, at the Locarno conference celebrating the fortieth anniversary of Dissent. *We print here the Locarno version.*—EDS.

In 1954, the year in which he founded *Dissent*, Irving Howe published an essay called "This Age of Conformity" in *Partisan Review*. *Partisan Review* was the organ of what has been dubbed (by T.J. Clarke) the "Trotskyite-Eliotic" culture of the New York Intellectuals of the 1930s. This was the culture of intellectuals who were not quite sure whether they were revolutionary Marxists or just social democrats. They were, however, very sure that modern art and literature had a lot to do with desirable social change, that literary and artistic modernism was part of the same large movement of the spirit as was socialism.

In his article, Howe contrasted the glory days of *Partisan Review*, the late 1930s, with the complacent passivity of the intellectuals in the United States at the beginning of the Eisenhower years. Here is his description of the cultural-political avant-garde for which *Partisan Review* wished to speak:

> The achievements of Joyce, Proust, Schoenberg, Bartok, Picasso, Matisse, to mention only the obvious figures, signified one of the major turnings in the cultural history of the West, a turning made all the more crucial by the fact that it came not during the vigor of a society but during its crisis. To counter this hostility which the work of such artists met among all the official spokesmen of culture, to discover formal terms and modes through which to secure these achievements, to insist upon the continuity between their work and the accepted, because dead, artists of the past—this became the task of the avant-garde. Somewhat later a section of the avant-garde also became politically active, and not by accident; for precisely those aroused sensibilities that had responded to the innovations of the modern masters now responded to the crisis of modern society. Thus, in the early years of a magazine like *Partisan Review*—roughly between 1936 and 1941—these two radical impulses came together in an uneasy but fruitful union; and it was in those years that the magazine seemed most exciting and vital as a link between art and experience, between the critical consciousness and the political conscience, between the avant-garde of letters and the independent left of politics.

I vaguely remember reading this essay as an eager young twenty-two-year-old. At that age, I thought that the end of desire was to get something published in *Partisan Review*. For that magazine seemed to offer the possibility of bringing together beauty and justice, high culture and human freedom, critical consciousness and political conscience. Irving Howe's own essays, in particular, seemed admirable examples of such synthesis. Forty years ago, I probably believed every word of the passage I just quoted from Howe.

Rereading this passage now, I find that I believe very little of it. I do not think that the art and literature of the early twentieth century marked a major turning in the cultural history of the West. The cultural activity of the years 1900 to 1920 does not seem to me more distinguished, important, or path-breaking than that of later decades of the century. I find it hard to detect any sharp discontinuity between

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those years and the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Virginia Woolf's claim that "Around December 1910, human nature changed" now strikes me as ludicrous. The most that changed was the sexual behavior of some of Woolf's friends and relations.

Furthermore, I cannot believe that the troubles of the early decades of our century are even a reasonable candidate for "the crisis of modern society." The terms in which the intellectuals of that period discussed social-political issues, and in particular the opposition between socialism and capitalism, no longer seem in point. The idea of "the breakdown of capitalism" has lost its force, as has the assumption that the world as a whole has entered upon a process called "modernization." The big question for the coming century seems to be something like "Can either the rule of law or the ideals of human equality and of global fraternity survive in an over-populated and poisoned world, most of which is under the control of semiliterate warlords brandishing nuclear arms?" When the historians of the thirtieth century look back, they may find that the best twentieth century prognosticators were the writers of fantasy and science fiction, rather than the sophisticated practitioners of social theory.

Robert Kaplan has suggested that the moral of current events in Iraq, Somalia, and Bosnia is that a majority of the planet's inhabitants "to whom the comfort and stability of a middle-class life is utterly unknown, find war and a barracks existence a step up." In a memorable image, he described people like ourselves—middle-class American and European readers of magazines like this one—as similar to riders in a stretch limousine, making our way through a mob of ragged and desperate people moving in the opposite direction. Kaplan's description of our situation amounts to saying that while Europe and America have been worrying about how to go forward from capitalism, a lot of the rest of the world has been hoping to advance to feudalism. Forecasts like Kaplan's make plausible Albert Hirschman's suggestion that we may find ourselves saying "God give us back the class struggle!" We may find ourselves longing for the old military-industrial complexes, and for the old nation-states that they corrupted, just as the French found themselves longing for the return of *les rois faineants*.

Reading some of Irving Howe's later work recently I came to realize that he probably would have had his own doubts about the passage I have quoted. Howe was too forward-looking to spend much time correcting or glossing his past writings. But by the time he wrote *A Margin of Hope* he was much more skeptical about the very idea of a "movement" than he had been thirty years before. In that book, written in the early 1980s, he pokes gentle fun at Philip Rahv's insistence that *Partisan Review* should "always seem to be moving somewhere." In one paragraph, indeed, he comes close to explicitly repudiating what he had written twenty-five years before. There he says:

> The union of the *advanced*, much as it entranced and enabled, was an idea that could not long endure. Avant-gardes march forward, but not necessarily to the same tune or in the same direction. . . .[t]he union between cultural modernism and independent radicalism was neither a proper marriage nor a secure liaison, it was a meeting between parties hurrying in opposite directions, brief, hectic, messy.

What Howe says here was anticipated by his own practice in editing *Dissent*. The difference between that magazine and *Partisan Review* is that *Dissent*, and the group of writers around it, felt able to dispense with membership in a movement. They were content simply to throw themselves into a lot of campaigns. By a campaign, I mean something finite, something that can be recognized to have succeeded or to have, so far, failed. Movements, by contrast, neither succeed nor fail. They are too big and too amorphous to do anything that simple. They share in what Kierkegaard called "the passion of the infinite." They are exemplified by Christianity, nihilism, and Marxism.

Membership in a movement requires the ability to see particular campaigns for particular goals as parts of something much bigger, and as having little significance in themselves. This bigger thing is the course of human events described as a process of maturation. By

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contrast, campaigns for such goals as the unionization of migrant farm workers in the American Southwest, or banning big trucks from the Alps, or the overthrow (by votes or by force) of a corrupt government, or legal recognition of gay marriage, can stand on their own feet. They can be conducted without much attention to literature, art, philosophy, or history. But movements must levy contributions from each of these areas of culture. For these areas provide the larger context within which politics is no longer just politics, but rather the matrix out of which will emerge something like Paul's "new being in Christ" or Mao's "new socialist man"—the mature stage of humanity, the one which will put aside current childishness.

Movement politics, the sort that held "bourgeois reformism" in contempt, was the kind of politics that Howe came to know all too well in the thirties, and was dubious about when it was reinvented in the sixties. This kind of politics assumes that things must be changed utterly, so that a new kind of beauty may be born. Howe knew so well what it was like to belong to a movement when he was young that he was able to do without movements when he was older. So he, and the magazine he founded, were able to stick to campaigning. But of course this does not mean that he turned away from literature, art, and history. Howe stayed in contact with all of these (though not with philosophy—which, to him, as to most other American leftist intellectuals, had never seemed particularly important). What he stopped trying to do was to weave these together with politics. The difference between reading *Partisan Review* and reading *Dissent* was that one read the former in order to take one's own spiritual temperature, and the latter in order to get the details on how the strong were currently oppressing the weak, to learn exactly how the rich were presently cheating the poor. *Partisan Review* was something to be lived up to, but *Dissent* was, and is, a source of information and advice.

Even though Howe confessed in his autobiography to being troubled by an inability to "reconcile my desire to be a writer with remembered fantasies about public action," he was the envy of his contemporaries, precisely because he was able to find the time to be both an accomplished man of letters and the unpaid editor of his country's most useful political magazine. Howe would have loathed being called a warrior-saint, but that term does help catch one of the reasons he came to play the role in many people's lives that Orwell had played in his. The young people who helped him with *Dissent* learned from him how one could combine the contemplative and the active lives without trying to synthesize the two. They learned how to look inward and outward on alternate days of the week.

Most of us, when young, hope for purity of heart. The easiest way to assure oneself of this purity is to will one thing—but this requires seeing everything as part of a pattern whose center is that single thing. Movements offer such a pattern, and thus offer such assurance of purity. Howe's ability, in his later decades, to retain both critical consciousness and political conscience while not attempting to fuse the two into something larger than either, showed his admirers how to forgo such purity, and such a pattern. For Howe made *Dissent* into a magazine that was more concerned with what the strong are doing to the weak than with deep questions about the spirit of the age or about deep underlying causes of social and cultural change. The difference between *Partisan Review* and *Dissent* was the difference between concern for being sufficiently sophisticated, sufficiently mature intellectually, and concern with evitable human suffering. *Dissent* remains pretty much the only leftist organ in the United States that is more concerned with spelling out tactics for fighting injustice than with maneuvering for strategic position in intellectual or political circles.

The epigraph of Howe's early book *Politics and the Novel* is taken from Max Scheler: "True tragedy arises 'when the idea of "justice" appears to be leading to the destruction of higher values.' " Someone whose identity is found within a movement, either cultural or political, hopes to avoid that kind of tragedy by purifying his heart, by having only

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one yearning and only one fantasy. Such an aspirant will repeat over and over "Not my will, but the movement's, be done." Part of what helped Howe turn from movements to campaigns was the lesson he learned from political novels: a lesson about the dangers of such attempts at self-purification and self-surrender. A multiplicity of campaigns has the same advantage as a plurality of gods or of novels: each campaign is finite, and there is always another campaign to enlist in when the first fails or goes off the track. The realized impurity of a movement can destroy the person who has identified with that movement, but the impurity of a campaign can be taken in one's stride: such impurity is just what one expects of something that is, like oneself, finite and mortal.

What Howe said of modernism is true of all movements, but of no campaigns: namely, that it "must always struggle but never quite triumph, and then, after a time, must struggle in order not to triumph." If the passion of the infinite were to triumph, it would betray itself by revealing itself to have been merely a passion for something finite. Anyone who prides himself on having achieved purity of heart convicts himself out of his own mouth. So Howe, I think, raised just the right question when, at the end of an essay on "The Idea of the Modern," he asks "How, come to think of it, do great cultural movements end?"

I would answer this question by saying that such a movement can only be killed off by another movement of the same kind. It takes a new sublime to kill an old sublime. As the century wore on, it became increasingly difficult for cultural critics to avoid demoting "modernism" from the sublimity of a movement to the finitude of a period: to avoid saying that Proust, Picasso, and the rest were characteristic neither of a change in human nature nor of a crisis of modern society, but simply of early twentieth-century art and literature, as Baudelaire and Delacroix had been characteristic of mid-nineteenth-century art and literature.

The increasing mustiness of modernism in the fifties and sixties caused the journals of that period to be filled with essays like Howe's "Idea of the Modern"—essays that tried, and to my mind invariably failed, to offer "formal terms and modes through which to secure" the achievements of literary modernism. Eventually such attempts were tacitly abandoned. But there were still people who could not live without a movement. So they invented a new one. They proclaimed that although the sublimity claimed by modernism had, unfortunately, proved spurious, one more turn of the screw will take us from modernism to *post*modernism, and thereby enable us to attain *true* sublimity.

Not all the books that describe themselves as about "the postmodern" are up-market media hype. Gianni Vattimo's and Zygmunt Baumann's books, for example, are not. But books like Jean Baudrillard's and Frederic Jameson's are what Vincent Descombes calls "philosophies of current events." These books are meta-hypes, hyping the very process of media hyping, hoping to determine our fate by examining the entrails of our magazines. The readers of such books ask themselves whether the latest building, television program, advertisement, rock group, or curriculum is properly postmodern, or whether it still betrays traces of mere modernism.

Reading such postmodern philosophies of current events leads one to wonder just how much of modernism itself was media hype, and whether Howe himself did not succumb to the hype put out by Pound, Eliot, and others when he wrote that their period had marked "one of the major turnings in the cultural history of the West." I suspect that someday we may look back on Stendhal's and Baudelaire's insistence that it is absolutely necessary to be modern as the beginning of a public relations campaign that, though begun with the best of intentions, eventually got out of control, and ended in involuntary self-parody. We may also look back on Weber's distinction between traditional and modern society as a useful tool insofar as it provided suggestions for campaigns, but as an unfortunate re-enchantment insofar as it inspired a new philosophical problematic.

I hope that our successors in the next century will turn away from this problematic—the problematic of "the nature of modernity"—and

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will write the sociopolitical history of the West without mention of modernism, postmodernism, or any other such "major turning." I hope they will write a narrative of a very large number of overlapping campaigns, rather than of a few great movements. I hope they agree with Bruno Latour, who called his latest book *We Have Never Been Modern*, that history is an endless network of changing relationships, without any great big climactic ruptures or peripities. I hope they decide that terms like "traditional society," "modern society," and "postmodern society," as well as "traditional art," "modern art," and "postmodern art," caused more trouble than they were worth.

The discourse of twentieth-century intellectuals never quite got over the habit of asking questions about the spirit of the age. It never got over the kind of trend-spotting that Hegel and Marx made seem so attractive and so profound. I see the effort to spot, or create, a trend called "postmodernism" as the beginning of a welcome anti-trend-spotting trend, but as having picked exactly the wrong label. It has defined itself by opposition to the modern, thereby taking for granted the existence of something it would have done better to question. Lyotard is right that we need to give up on grand narratives. But his critics are right that we have to find a way of doing so that will not dramatize our own achievement. For such dramatization will result in one more grand narrative, namely, the kind of philosophy of current events that tells us how excitingly different we intellectuals have just now become.

To give up on modernism, we shall have to start thinking about the similarities, rather than the differences, between where we are now, where we were before Auschwitz, and where we were before the French Revolution. We are still trying to think of ways to minimize injustice and maximize equality. We are still trying to create beauty—thought of, with Stendhal, as "the promise of happiness." But in trying to create both ordinary human happiness and promises of new sorts of happiness, we are not engaged in a process of emancipation or enlightenment. For there is neither a true humanity to be emancipated nor a built-in natural light (called "reason" or "conscience") by which such emancipation is made possible. Instead of taking our cue from Hegel, we should take it from Darwin and Mendel, and say that History or Humanity no more has an immanent teleology than does Life. The evolution of Western society has been, and will continue to be, as jerky, hit-or-miss, and unpredictable as was the evolution of the primates.

If we think of both biological and social evolution as a process of random mutation, partially determined by an equally random fit or lack of fit with rapidly changing ecological niches, we shall find the nature of modernity as unprofitable a topic as the nature of man. There was nothing called Life that intended the mammals and regarded them as a great improvement on the reptiles. There was nothing called Reason or History that intended the industrialized democracies, or that will regard the warlords who may replace them as either an improvement or a decline. *We* shall see the warlords, and the vastly increased injustice and misery that their rule will bring, as a decline, just as the more intellectually inclined reptiles may have seen the mammals as a decline. But there is no entity larger than ourselves or the warlords to adjudicate the issue, just as there was no entity larger than the mammals and the reptiles. There are various campaigns we might undertake (for example, a campaign for a vast increase in the numbers of the UN's Blue Helmets, and a proportionate decline in the sizes of individual nations' armies) to lessen the probability of the coming of the warlords. But there is no movement into which to throw ourselves, and no historical moment whose significance we have to grasp.

If, following Latour's and Descombes's suggestions, we were to start writing narratives of overlapping campaigns and the overlapping careers of conspicuous individuals and groups—narratives *not* broken up into chapters with titles like "the Enlightenment," "Romanticism," "Literary Modernism," or "Late Capitalism"—we

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should lose dramatic intensity. But we might help immunize ourselves against the passion of the infinite. If we dropped references to movements we could settle for telling a story about how the human beings in the neighborhood of the North Atlantic, over the course of two hundred years, made their futures different from their pasts at a constantly accelerating pace. We could still, like Hegel and Acton, tell this story as a story of increasing freedom. But we could drop, along with any sense of inevitable progress, any sense of immanent teleology. We could drop any attempt to capitalize History, to view it as something as big and strong as Nature or God.

If we want the discourse of the next century's intellectuals to be interestingly different from that of the twentieth-century intellectuals, we could try forgetting about postmodernism and about movements, and stick to campaigns. This would mean giving up on the whole idea of *maturation*. It would mean getting back behind Hegel and ceasing to ask the question that, as Foucault has acutely remarked, dominated Kant's political thought: the question about the significance of "today," the question about how mature we have succeeded in becoming so far, and how far we yet must go. It would mean limiting questions about "today" to empirical attempts to predict the future.

It is one thing to predict that the wars of the next century will be between warlords rather than between nation-states. It is another to ask about the significance of this event. It is one thing to predict that whole parts of the world (Thailand, for example) will be depopulated by AIDS, and another thing to try to fit AIDS into a story about the development of humanity. That would be like the dinosaurs trying to fit whatever comet or plague wiped them out into a story about the development of Life. Hegel's claim that the real is the rational meant, if it meant anything, that the increase in Spirit's self-consciousness could not be ended by a comet. To give up on that claim would mean acknowledging that the past two hundred years of diminishing suffering and increasing equality in a relatively small portion of the planet was just a very fortunate happenstance—a happenstance very much worth perpetuating, but one that was no more *rational* than the world of the science-fiction dystopias.

It is sometimes said that the nineteenth century believed in inevitable progress, whereas ours gave it up early on. There is some truth to this, but it is one thing to give up on inevitability and another to give up on philosophies of current events. We shall be tempted by such philosophies as long as we look not merely for predictions of what is likely to happen and ways of influencing what will actually happen, but for an understanding of something extra called the *significance* of events. This idea of significance is parasitic on the idea of maturation—the idea that there is a more grown-up point of view, a more mature description, of what has been going on lately than has been given by our predecessors.

If we are to get rid of the lurking assumption of immanent teleology we have to be content with evaluating redescriptions by their utility rather than by their maturity. We shall look for redescriptions of current events that make a difference to our ideas of what is to be done here and now—that help in a specific campaign—as opposed to redescriptions that suggest that it is time to get off the bandwagon of one movement and shift over to that of another.

The turn away from movements to campaigns that I am suggesting is, in philosophical terms, a turn away from Kant, Hegel, and Marx and toward Bacon, Hume, and Mill—considered not as empiricists but as protopragmatists. It is a turn away from the transcendental question, "What are the conditions of possibility of this historical moment?" to the pragmatic question, "What are the causal conditions of replacing this present actuality with a better future actuality?" the intellectuals of our century have been distracted from campaigns by the need to "put events in perspective," and by the urge to organize movements around something out of sight, something located at the impossibly distant end of this perspective. But this has made the best the enemy of the better. A lot of intellectual and spiritual energy has been wasted defining movements, energy that could have been better spent prosecuting campaigns. □

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George M. Fredrickson

RESISTANCE TO WHITE SUPREMACY

Nonviolence in the U.S. South and South Africa

During the 1950s and early 1960s, nonviolent protesters challenged legalized racial segregation and discrimination in the only two places on earth where such blatant manifestations of white supremacy could be found—the southern United States and the Union of South Africa. Comparing these movements gives us a better perspective on the recent history of black liberation struggles in the two societies.

The African National Congress's (ANC) "Campaign of Defiance Against Unjust Laws" in 1952 resulted in the arrest of approximately eight thousand blacks (including Indians and Coloreds as well as Africans) and a handful of whites for planned acts of civil disobedience against recently enacted apartheid legislation. The campaign did not make the government alter its course, and it was called off early in 1953 after riots broke out in the wake of nonviolent actions in the Eastern Cape. Repressive legislation classifying deliberate transgression of the law for political purposes a serious crime made the ANC wary of attempting another nationwide campaign of civil disobedience, but it could not prevent the congress and other black or nonracial organizations from protesting nonviolently in other ways. School boycotts, bus boycotts, noncooperation with the program of removing blacks to new townships, and mass marches to protest efforts to force black African women to carry passes* were among the actions of the mid-to-late fifties that the ANC led or supported. In 1960, the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC)—a militant faction that had recently seceded from the ANC launched a campaign of civil disobedience against the pass laws that ended with the massacre of sixty-nine unarmed protesters at Sharpeville. Chief Albert Lutuli, president-general of the ANC, showed his sympathy for the Sharpeville victims by publicly burning his own pass, and the one-day stay-at-home that the congress called to register its solidarity with the PAC was well supported. But the government quickly suppressed all public protest, and both the ANC and the PAC were banned and driven underground. After Sharpeville, nonviolent direct action no longer seemed a viable option for the liberation movement, and in 1961 some ANC leaders, in cooperation with the South African Communist party, inaugurated the era of armed struggle by establishing a separate organization to carry on acts of sabotage against hard targets.

The nonviolent phase of the American civil rights movement began with the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955–56 and culminated in the great Mississippi and Birmingham and Selma, Alabama, campaigns of 1963–65. Viewed narrowly as an attack on legalized segregation and disfranchisement in the southern states, the movement was remarkably successful. It led to the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965, which effectively outlawed separatist "Jim Crow" laws and assured southern blacks access to the ballot box. It becomes immediately apparent therefore that a fundamental difference between the two movements is that one was successful in achieving its immediate objectives while the other was a conspicuous failure.

Fully explaining success or failure obviously

* Black African men were already required to do so.

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requires an assessment of the context—what each movement was up against and what outside help it could expect in its struggle. But before we look at such circumstances, we have to analyze the movements themselves in an effort to compare the resources that each brought to the confrontation with white power. Furthermore, we should not ignore the possibility that the two movements may have influenced each other.

Surprisingly, there is little evidence that the two nonviolent movements influenced each other in a significant way. Before World War II, African-American influence on black South African ideologies and movements had been substantial, but the use of Black America as inspiration appears to have tapered off during the postwar years. Before the triumph of the white Nationalists in 1948, black American interest in South Africa had been limited; the African Methodist Episcopal Church had provided the most important connection when it had established itself in South Africa at the turn of the century. For most African Americans Africa meant West Africa, but awareness of the white-dominated nation at the tip of the continent increased rapidly after the rise of apartheid showed that South Africa was out of step with a world that seemed at last to be moving toward an acceptance of the principle of racial equality.

Nevertheless, the Defiance Campaign does not seem to have made a great impression on African-Americans. The Council on African Affairs, a group of black radicals who sought to influence American opinion on behalf of decolonization, circulated a petition supporting the campaign that garnered 3,800 signatures—many of which came from white radicals—and $835 in donations; but this appears to be the most significant expression of African-American concern. The campaign was also mentioned in passing in a November 1952 petition to the United Nations on African issues sponsored by twenty-five organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), but the Association's organ, the *Crisis*, which commented frequently in 1952 and 1953 on the rise of apartheid, did not cover the campaign against it. By 1952 black Americans were beginning to notice African developments, especially the first stirring of independence movements in West Africa, but interest was far less intense than it became a few years later.

Black Americans might have been more aroused by the Defiance Campaign if it had not occurred at a time when interest in direct action as a form of protest in the United States was at a low ebb. Nonviolence had been placed on the agenda of civil rights activity during and immediately after World War II with A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington movement of 1941–45 and the founding and first sit-ins of the Committee on Racial Equality (CORE); but by 1952 McCarthyism and the conservative mood in the country had made established black leaders reluctant to endorse actions that opponents of civil rights could describe as subversive; they feared a backlash that would weaken popular support for a legalistic and gradualist reform strategy that was beginning to bear fruit, especially in court decisions affirming the basic constitutional rights of African Americans. When interest in nonviolence revived after the Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955–56, scarcely anyone seems to have thought to invoke the South African precedent.

Montgomery, in turn, does not appear to have inspired the dramatic bus boycott that took place in the Johannesburg township of Alexandria in 1957. Martin Luther King reacted to the Alexandria boycott by expressing his admiration for protesters who had to walk ten or fifteen miles, noting that those in Montgomery had often been driven to work, but he did not claim any connection between the two movements. The Alexandria boycott was a desperate act of resistance to a fare increase, not a protest against segregation or denial of civil rights, and replicated a similar action in the same township during World War II. At the time when Martin Luther King and the American nonviolent movement were first attracting the attention of the world, the faith of black South Africans in passive resistance was wearing thin. When direct action on a broad front commenced in the United States in 1960 and 1961, the ANC was rejecting nonviolence in favor of armed struggle.

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The movements were connected historically in one sense, however. Both were inspired to some extent by the same prototype—Mahatma Gandhi's use of militant nonviolence in the struggle for Indian independence. King, of course, made much of the Gandhian example and tried to apply the spirit and discipline of *Satyagraha* to nonviolent protests in the American South. The statements of purpose issued by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in the early 1960s were permeated with Gandhian rhetoric and philosophy. Gandhi was less often invoked by the Defiance Campaigners, but their methods, especially their public announcements of where, when, and by whom laws would be disobeyed and their refusal to make bail in an effort to "fill the jails," could have been learned from a Gandhian textbook.

If both movements drew inspiration from the great Indian apostle of nonviolence, they received the message by different routes. Gandhism came to King and the American movement by way of a radical pacifism that derived mostly from the left wing of the Protestant "social gospel" tradition. King's nonviolent antecedents and mentors were from the Christian pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation and its anti-segregationist offshoot, CORE. Mainly the creation of white Christian radicals such as the Rev. A.J. Muste, this intellectual and spiritual tradition lacked deep roots in the black community, although it did have such notable black adherents as Bayard Rustin and James Farmer. Nevertheless, there was a long history of African-American admiration for Gandhi as a brown man who was fighting for the freedom of his people from white or European oppression. Black newspapers sometimes expressed the hope that a Negro Gandhi might appear to lead a nonviolent movement against racial oppression in the United States.

Gandhi cast an even longer shadow in South Africa, because he had first experimented with *Satyagraha* as the leader of the South African Indian community's struggle for rights as British subjects in the period between 1906 and 1914. The South African Native National Congress, founded in 1912 and later renamed the African National Congress, had been so impressed with Gandhi's mobilization of Indians for nonviolent resistance that it included "passive action" as one of the methods it proposed to use in its struggle for African citizenship rights. In 1919, the congress actually engaged in "passive action" on the Witwatersrand in an unsuccessful attempt to render the pass laws unenforceable through a mass refusal to obey them. But for the next thirty years this potential weapon lay rusting in the ANC's arsenal as the politics of passing resolutions and petitioning the government prevailed. A politically aroused segment of the Indian minority revived the Gandhian mode of protest in 1946 and 1947 when, with the encouragement of Gandhi and the newly independent Indian government, it engaged in "passive resistance" against new legislation restricting Indian residential and trading rights. With the triumph of the Nationalists in 1948 and the coming of apartheid, the Indian passive resisters gave up their separate struggle and allied themselves with the ANC. The Defiance Campaign itself was in fact jointly sponsored by the ANC and the South African Indian Congress, and several veterans of earlier Indian passive resistance struggles played conspicuous roles teaching Gandhian nonviolent techniques, as well as helping to plan the campaign and participating in its actions.

In neither case, however, does a tracing of the Gandhian legacy provide a full picture of the ideological origins of mass nonviolent action. Mass pressure tactics do not require a specifically Gandhian rationale; they may derive simply from a sense that less militant tactics have proved fruitless. The decision to engage in nonviolent direct action usually constitutes a major escalation of resistance, a shift from legally authorized protest by an elite to initiatives that are more threatening and potentially violence-provoking because they involve bringing masses of aggrieved people into the streets. A philosophical or religious commitment to nonviolence is not necessary to a choice of boycotts and civil disobedience as vehicles of resistance. In fact, groups committed ultimately to a revolutionary overthrow of

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the existing order often embrace nonviolent action as a means of raising consciousness and encouraging social polarization. In the United States, the Communist party and its allies had engaged in a variety of nonviolent protests against racial discrimination during the 1930s, including the first mass march on Washington.

Communists were excluded from A. Philip Randolph's March on Washington movement of 1941, but Randolph was clearly influenced by their example in his effort to create an all-black movement for equal rights that would go beyond the customary legalistic methods of the NAACP and use mass action to pressure the government. As a trade unionist, he was also aware of the sit-down strike and other examples of labor militancy that owed nothing to Christianity or pacifism. Neither religious nor a pacifist, he found Gandhi's campaigns attractive because they showed what could be achieved by "nonviolent goodwill direct action." He represented a way of thinking that could endorse everything Martin Luther King, Jr. was doing without accepting his nonviolent theology. For Randolph and those in the movement who shared his views, it was sufficient that nonviolent direct action was a practical means for African Americans to improve their position in society—while violent resistance, however defensible it might be in the abstract, was not in their view a viable option for a racial minority. King himself not only tolerated this viewpoint in his associates but at times came close to embracing it himself, at least to the extent that he came to realize that the effectiveness of nonviolence resulted more from its ability to coerce the oppressor than from any appeal it made to conscience.

In South Africa, non-Gandhian pressures for nonviolent mass action came during the 1940s from the young rebels in the ANC Youth League who had grown impatient with the older generation's willingness to work within the system of black "representation" established by the pre-apartheid white supremacist governments of Prime Ministers J.B.M. Hertzog and Jan Smuts. The Youth Leaguers, among whom were Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo, favored a boycott of segregated political institutions and experimentation with confrontational methods of protest. In 1949, the Youth Leaguers won control of the ANC, and the Program of Action that was subsequently enacted called for "immediate and active boycott, strike, civil disobedience, non-cooperation. . . ." The spirit of the Youth League and of the Defiance Campaign was not based on a belief in the power of love to convert enemies into friends or in the higher morality of nonviolence. Indeed, the very use of the term "defiance" suggests that anger more than *agape* was the emotion being called forth. The campaign, as its chief planner, Walter Sisulu, and its tactical leader, Volunteer-in-Chief Nelson Mandela, conceived it, was designed to enable an unarmed and impoverished majority to carry on its struggle against the tyrannical rule of an armed minority. If nonviolent methods failed, there was no firm ideological barrier to prevent the Young Turks of the ANC from embracing other means of struggle.

But there were still influential older figures in the congress who were nonviolent in principle. Among them was Chief Albert Lutuli, whose fervent Methodist Christianity predisposed him against taking up arms and sustained his hopes that oppressors could be redeemed by the sufferings of the oppressed. "The road to freedom is via the cross" was the memorable last line of the statement he made after the government had dismissed him from his chieftainship because he would not resign from the ANC. The fact that the idealistic Lutuli was elected president-general of the ANC in 1952 showed that the ANC of the 1950s, like the southern civil rights movement of the 1960s, brought together those who regarded nonviolence simply as a tactic and those who viewed it as an ethic.

Besides sharing the ideological ambiguity that seems to be inescapable when nonviolence becomes coercive mass action, the two movements tended to view the relationship of nonviolence to "normal" democratic politics in similar ways. Some forms of nonviolence are difficult to reconcile with democratic theory because they frankly seek to override decisions made by a properly constituted majority. But in

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both of these instances the protesters were denied the right to vote and were therefore able to argue that extraordinary means of exerting pressure were justified by their lack of access to other forms of political expression. One-person-one-vote was a major goal of both movements, and the attainment of it would presumably reduce, if not eliminate entirely, the need for nonviolent mass action, especially in South Africa, where blacks would then constitute a majority of the electorate. As Chief Lutuli put it in 1952, "Non-Violent Passive Resistance" is "a most legitimate and humane political pressure technique for a people denied all effective forms of constitutional striving." Speaking at the Prayer Pilgrimage to Washington in 1957, King made a litany of the phrase "Give us the ballot," and promised that if it were done "we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights. . . . We will no longer plead—we will write the proper laws on the books."

In addition to such similarities of ideology and ethos, the leadership of the two movements came from a similarly situated social group—what might be described as the educated elite of a subordinate color caste. Studies of the social composition of the ANC through the 1950s have shown that the organization was dominated by members of "an African bourgeoisie" or "petty bourgeoisie" that was characterized mainly by educational and professional achievements. Examinations of the origins of the southern civil rights movement have found the spur for militant action in the rise in southern cities and towns of what Steven Millner calls "a relatively independent black professional class."

It was a special product of legalized racial segregation that such elites were not—as is often the case under less stringent forms of ethnic or colonial domination—subject to alienation from their communities by a system that allows a favored few to move into the lower ranks of the governing institutions established by the dominant group. It might be taken as axiomatic that where race *per se* is the main line of division in a society, as it obviously was in South Africa and the American South, resistance will take the form of a cross-class movement led by members of the educated middle class. This does not mean, however, that less-educated and working-class blacks made little contribution to these movements. It was, of course, the plain folk who sustained the boycotts, often at great personal sacrifice. The point is that these freedom struggles were, and had to be, movements of peoples or communities rather than of social classes.

These similarities in the ideological and social character of the two movements did not preclude significant differences, to say nothing as yet of the obvious contrast of situations. The most significant structural difference between the Defiance Campaign and the nonviolent civil rights movement was that the latter grew out of a number of local struggles and was sustained by strong organizations at the community level, whereas the former was for the most part a centrally planned, from-the-top-down operation. The one area where the Defiance Campaign achieved something like mass involvement was in the cities of the Eastern Cape, where, as historian Tom Lodge has shown, it was able to build on the firm base provided by a recent history of local mobilization and protest. But nothing like the network of "movement centers" that was the source of the American movement existed to buttress nonviolent campaigns in South Africa. Where such centers existed in South Africa they were usually tied to labor organizations and trade unions; in the United States it was the black churches and black colleges that did the most to sustain local activism. Since every southern city had relatively prosperous black churches and many had some kind of higher educational facility for blacks, such an institutional matrix for community protest was widely available, whereas black unions were well established in only a few places in South Africa. Furthermore, South African black townships of the 1950s were quite different from southern black urban communities. Their populations, which included a large number of transients and illegal residents, were less socially stable and significantly poorer; there were fewer well-established cultural or religious institutions; there was a proportionately much smaller

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middle class and relatively little black entrepreneurship or business activity. Efforts were indeed made to establish community associations, but they had much less success than comparable efforts in Montgomery or Birmingham.

Even if the forces opposing each movement had been identical in strength and determination—which, of course, they were not—there seems little doubt that a centralized movement like the South African one would have been easier to repress. Even before the ANC was outlawed, the government was able to hobble it severely by banning or arresting its top leaders. In the American South in the 1950s, the NAACP was rendered ineffectual by state legal harassment that in some states amounted to an outright ban. It was partly to fill the vacuum created by persecution of the NAACP that independent local movements developed. These grassroots movements were more difficult to suppress by state action, and they flourished in places where the NAACP could no longer show itself. If such strong local communities and institutions had existed in South Africa, the government might have faced a variety of local actions that would have been much more difficult to counter than the centrally directed campaign of the ANC in 1952. (This in fact is what happened in the 1980s with the rise of the United Democratic Front, which was a federation of the community organizations that had sprung up in the 1970s and early 1980s.) When, during the mid-fifties, the congress attempted to assume the leadership of local struggles over housing or transportation, it fell short of effectively adjusting its organizational style to accommodate grass-roots initiatives. The ANC supported the Alexandria Bus Boycott of 1957 and helped it roll back a fare increase, but it failed to turn this spontaneous expression of community grievance into a durable township organization committed to broader objectives. In the later stages of the civil rights movement, SCLC was sometimes accused of coopting local campaigns and undercutting local initiatives. But its great successes in Birmingham and Selma were the product of a skillful coordination of local, regional, and national perspectives. SCLC's genius was that it could channel community energies to make them serve the cause of national civil rights reform.

Besides differing structurally, the two campaigns also diverged in the less tangible realm of culture and ethos. As the special prominence of ministers and churches in the American movement strongly suggests, religious belief directly inspired the African-American protesters to an extent that could not be paralleled in South Africa. The charisma of King as prophet-saint of the movement was instrumental in making it a moral and religious crusade rather than merely the self-interested action of a social group. The opposition of large numbers of black churches and church leaders to nonviolent direct action belies any notion that African-American Christianity necessarily sanctions militant protest, but King's creative interpretation and application of the gospel showed that it had the capacity to do so. The South African struggle, unlike the American, did not produce a Gandhi-like figure who could inspire the masses by persuading them that nonviolent protest was God's will. There was a reservoir of religious belief that might have been tapped—it surfaced at times in local actions that featured prayer and hymn-singing. But the ANC leadership was composed of highly educated men whose religious beliefs had little connection with those of the masses of Africans, especially those who were members of the independent "Zionist" churches that served a large proportion of urbanized Africans. The rival Pan-Africanist Congress formed in 1959 made a greater effort to draw the independent churches into the struggle, but it did not have time to accomplish much before it was banned in 1960. What King did that no South African leader was able to do was to weave together the black folk Christianity that was his own cultural heritage with the Gandhian conception of nonviolent resistance to empower a cause that both inspired its followers and disarmed the opposition of many whites. Hence the nonviolence of the American movement had a soul-stirring quality, both for its practitioners and for many white observers, that the more obviously conditional and pragmatic civil disobedience of the Defiance Campaign failed to project. Of course this resonance was in part the result of the extensive

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and usually sympathetic way that the national press covered the American movement and, by the sixties, of its exposure on national television. The Defiance Campaign by contrast received relatively little attention from the white South African press and was not widely noticed abroad (which is one reason why it did not serve as a model for African-American passive resisters).

The effects of contrasting media treatment suggest that the differences in the nature of the movements may tell us less about why they ultimately succeeded or failed than we are likely to learn from examining their external circumstances—what they were up against. The American protesters faced a divided and uncertain governmental opposition. The most important division among whites that the movement was able to exploit was between northerners who lacked a regional commitment to legalized segregation and southerners who believed that Jim Crow was central to their way of life. The success of the movement stemmed ultimately from its ability to get the federal government on its side and to utilize the U.S. Constitution against the outmoded states' rights philosophy of the southern segregationists. When King proclaimed that "civil disobedience to local laws is civil obedience to national laws," he exploited a tactical advantage the South African resisters did not possess; for they had no alternative to a direct confrontation with centralized state power. South African black protest leaders had long tried to drive a wedge between British imperial and South African settler regimes, but the withdrawal of British power beginning as early as 1906 and virtually complete by the 1930s had rendered such hopes illusory. For all practical purposes, South African whites in the 1950s were monolithic in their defense of white domination. In the United States it was of course federal intervention to overrule state practices of segregation and disfranchisement in the southern states that brought an end to Jim Crow. In South Africa there was no such power to which protesters could appeal.

The geopolitical context of the cold war and decolonization of Africa and Asia also cut in opposite ways, ultimately helping the American movement and hindering the South African. In the United States, the competition with the Soviet Union for the "hearts and minds" of Asians and Africans, especially by the early sixties, when several African nations achieved independence, made legalized segregation a serious international liability for the Eisenhower, Kennedy, and Johnson administrations. As reasons of state were added to other factors working against Jim Crow, the federal government become more susceptible to pressures from the civil rights movement. In South Africa, on the other hand, fears of communist subversion within the country and of Soviet influence in the newly independent African states of southern and central Africa panicked the white political leadership into pressing ahead with more radical schemes for the "separate development" and political repression of the black majority. Underlying these contrary assessments of the dangers of black insurgency was the basic difference between a white majority facing a demand for the inclusion of a minority and a white minority conscious that the extension of democratic rights would empower a black majority.

It would be cynical, however, to see nothing in the positive responses of many white Americans to the civil rights movement except self-interested calculations. White America has not been of one mind historically on the place of blacks in the republic. In the north, at least, there was an alternative or oppositional tradition in white racial thought, originating in the antislavery movement, that advocated the public equality of the races and offered a standing challenge—although one that was only intermittently influential—to the deeply rooted white supremacist tradition that was a legacy of African-American slavery. At times, as during Reconstruction and in the mid-1960s, racial liberals became ideologically dominant and were in a position to respond to black demands for civil and political equality with major reforms. (But, being liberals, they had great difficulty in addressing the problem of economic inequality.) In South Africa, by contrast, there was no white liberal tradition that went beyond a benevolent paternalism and no deep reservoir of theoretically color-blind

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attitudes toward democratic reform that could be appealed to. Nelson Mandela caught this difference when asked by an American journalist in one of his rare prison interviews during the 1980s why he had not followed the example of Martin Luther King and remained nonviolent: "Mr. Mandela said that conditions in South Africa are 'totally different' from conditions in the United States in the 1960s. In the United States, he said, democracy was deeply entrenched, and people struggling then had access to institutions that protected human rights. The white community in the United States was more liberal than whites in South Africa, and public authorities were restrained by law." (*Washington Times*, August 22, 1985)

Was it therefore inevitable that a nonviolent movement for basic civil rights would succeed in the United States and fail in South Africa? As probable as these outcomes might seem to be, one can imagine things turning out differently. It is arguable that without the astute and inspirational leadership provided by King and others, the struggle for black civil and political equality would have taken much longer. Any claim that the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 were inevitable obscures the creative achievements of the liberation movement. For South Africa the argument has been made that the 1961 decision of the ANC to sanction some forms of violence was a mistake; the full potential of nonviolent resistance had not been exhausted, and the sabotage campaign that resulted from the decision was a disastrous failure that devastated the organization. To support this view, one could point, as Tom Lodge has done, to the relative success of the last mass nonviolent action of the 1960s—the three-day stay-at-home of 1961. Lodge has also noted that the one ANC-related organization that was not banned shortly after Sharpeville—the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU)—had a capability for politically motivated strikes that was never fully exploited. Clearly the sabotage campaign that became the center of resistance activity in the 1960s posed little threat to white domination and turned out very badly for the ANC because it exposed its top leadership to arrest and imprisonment. If nonviolence had its inherent limitations as a resistance strategy under the conditions that prevailed in South Africa, it would be hard to establish from its record of achievement in the 1960s and 1970s that the resort to violence, however justifiable in the abstract, represented a more effective method of struggle. Of course the key historical actors, like Nelson Mandela, Walter Sisulu, and Oliver Tambo, did not have the benefit of historical hindsight and can scarcely be condemned for trying something different when nonviolent resistance had obviously failed to move the regime and had become more and more difficult to undertake.

Although Martin Luther King, Jr. had shown some awareness of the South African campaigns of the mid-nineteen fifties, he first indicated a deep interest in South African developments in 1959 when he wrote to Chief Lutuli to express his admiration for him and to send him a copy of *Stride Toward Freedom*. The Sharpeville massacre in 1960 and the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Lutuli in 1961 for his espousal of nonviolent resistance heightened King's interest and prompted him to speak out vigorously against apartheid. In a 1962 address to the NAACP national convention, King said, "If I lived in South Africa today, I would join Chief Lithuli [sic] as he says to his people, 'Break this law. Don't take the unjust pass system where you must have passes. Take them and tear them up and throw them away."

King made his fullest statement about South Africa in a speech given in London, England, on December 7, 1964, as he was en route to receive his own Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo.

> In our struggle for freedom and justice in the U.S., which has also been so long and arduous, we feel a powerful sense of identification with those in the far more deadly struggle for freedom in South Africa. We know how Africans there, and their friends of other races, strove for half a century to win their freedom by nonviolent methods, and we know how this non-violence was met by increasing violence from the state, increasing repression, culminating in the shootings of Sharpeville and all that has happened since . . . even in Mississippi we can organize to

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register Negro voters, we can speak to the press, we can in short organize people in non-violent action. But in South Africa even the mildest form of non-violent resistance meets with years of punishment, and leaders over many years have been silenced and imprisoned. We can understand how in that situation people felt so desperate that they turned to other methods, such as sabotage.*

Like Mandela two decades later, King was sensitive to differences between the two contexts that would make nonviolence more feasible in the American case. But in the same speech he indicated a way that nonviolence could be brought to bear against apartheid. "Our responsibility presents us with a unique opportunity," he said. "We can join in the one form of non-violent *action* that could bring freedom and justice to South Africa; the action which African leaders have appealed for in a massive movement for economic sanctions." Almost exactly one year after his London speech, on December 10, 1965, King made another strong appeal for sanctions in an address on behalf of the American Committee on Africa. "The international potential of non-violence has never been employed," he said. "Non-violence has been practiced within national borders in India, the U.S. and in regions of Africa with spectacular success. The time has come fully to utilize non-violence through a massive international boycott. . . ."*

King, who gave vigorous support to the sanctions movement for the remaining three years of his life, did not of course live to see the anti-apartheid movement come to the verge of success without unleashing the violent revolution that so many observers had believed would be necessary for the overthrow of white supremacy. It is now possible to argue that the breakthrough that came with the release of Nelson Mandela and the unbanning of the ANC was as much, if not more, the result of international non-violence as the fruit of a strategy of violent resistance inaugurated by the congress in the 1960s. The apartheid regime was not in fact decisively defeated on the battlefield or driven from power by a domestic insurrection. The armed struggle of the ANC served to remind the world that blacks were determined to be liberated from white oppression, but it was the ethical disapproval of much of humanity that destroyed the morale of South Africa's ruling whites, and the increasingly effective economic sanctions that persuaded its business community and those in the government whom they influenced that apartheid had no future. Of course those sanctions would undoubtedly have been lighter and the disapprobation less sharp if the domestic resistance of the 1980s had not provoked the government into a final desperate effort to suppress dissent by force. But that domestic resistance was primarily a matter of withdrawing cooperation from the regime. Not entirely nonviolent, it was predominantly so—a great domestic boycott to parallel the international one. The spirit of Gandhi, long since repudiated by the ANC in exile, was alive and well in the United Democratic Front, the domestic movement that rallied behind the ANC's goal of a nonracial democratic South Africa. In 1989, with the emergence of the Mass Democratic Movement, South Africa once again saw massive nonviolent actions against segregation, led by clergymen like Allen Boesak and Desmond Tutu—both of whom had been greatly influenced by King and the church-based American freedom struggle—and featuring the singing of African-American freedom songs. Nonviolence may not have been sufficient to liberate South Africa, but it is no longer possible to deny that it has played a major role in bringing that nation to the brink of democracy. It would not be beyond the power of historical analogy to describe the successful anti-apartheid movement as Birmingham and Selma on a world scale.

During the negotiations leading to democratic elections in South Africa, nonviolent direct action, or the threat of it, played a significant role in keeping the process headed in the right direction. The ability to mobilize large numbers of Africans for strikes and mass demonstrations was the ANC's main source of leverage whenever it was faced with foot dragging or intransigence from the other side of the bargaining table. But political violence

* Both speeches are to be found in the Library and Archives of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Change in Atlanta, Ga.

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among blacks, instigated in many cases by diehard elements within the police and the government, has bedeviled the transition from apartheid to democracy and is not likely to end with the ANC's coming to power. Mandela has appealed over and over again for an end to the killing, making an effort to conciliate black opponents like Gatsha Buthelezi and his Inkatha movement and to restrain his own militant supporters, some of whom have found it difficult to make the transition from armed struggle to democratic politics. But the persistence of the carnage has led him to rely increasingly on the army to keep order.

There is a rough analogy here to the problem of black-on-black violence that has increasingly drawn the anguished attention of African-American leaders. Missing of course is the overtly political aspect of the South African violence. Sadly similar, however, has been the failure of appeals to conscience in the nonviolent tradition, such as those that have been made so often by the Rev. Jesse Jackson. The long-term solution to the problem of gang warfare and black-on-black crime has been clear enough—the improvement of ghetto education and opportunities so that poor young blacks can look forward to something better than unemployment, crime, and imprisonment. But in the short run, the need for more and better policing has become evident to many blacks. In both the United States and South Africa, the glorious history of nonviolent resistance to white supremacy seems, on the surface at least, to be sadly irrelevant to the problem of reducing intragroup violence and alleviating the underlying poverty and despair that often cause it. But perhaps some of the spirit, if not the precise methods, of the earlier freedom struggles can inspire greater and more creative efforts to achieve the goal to which they were dedicated—societies that are both nonracist and nonviolent. □

This article was given as a paper at the 1993 Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Conference held in Newcastle, England, and will be included with other papers from that conference in a book to be published in the United States in late 1995 by St. Martin's Press.

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Joanne Barkan

THE OLD WELFARE STATE IN THE NEW AGE OF COMPETITION

In 1944, John Maynard Keynes suffered a heart attack as he ran up a flight of stairs on his way to yet another committee meeting in the New Hampshire resort called Bretton Woods. Meetings, especially those deciding the economic fate of the world, take their toll. In addition to battling health problems, Keynes wrangled over postwar international monetary, employment, and spending policies. He won only some of the disputes at the Bretton Woods conference. Less than two years later, he died without realizing that he had secured enough to pave the way for a growth-oriented world order and, on the national level, the Keynesian welfare state.

In the largely tragic sweep of human history, the postwar period stands out as a high point—seriously flawed, yes, but still a high point—of economic development, redistribution, and social justice in parts of the world. It's over now, undermined by conditions that Keynes predicted and hoped to avoid. The title of this article turns out to be an antinomy—the old welfare state has no place in the new age of competition.

Leftists generally agree on what went right for twenty-five years after the war. Briefly, the story goes like this: Keynes advocated liberalized international trade, but he opposed (even more vigorously, some say) an open financial order. Without controls on the movement of capital and a stable system of pegged exchange rates, Keynes believed national governments would not have enough autonomy to pursue full employment and welfare-state policies. Deregulate capital and allow exchange rates to float, Keynes warned, and the consequences for the welfare state would be grim.

Governments wouldn't be able to set the interest rates they needed; money would be shipped abroad to avoid taxes; economic elites would use the threat of a capital strike to manipulate legislation; speculators would destabilize entire economies by shifting vast amounts of capital from one country to another in search of high interest rates and appreciating currencies. (The only thing Keynes couldn't predict was how fast computer-aided capital flows could be.)

The Bretton Woods accords did a fair job of limiting the problems. The agreements incorporated fixed exchange rates pegged to the dollar and some capital controls. To varying degrees, the industrialized nations devised fiscal and monetary policies aimed at full employment. As world creditor, the United States underwrote the development of the West European welfare states. Workers joined unions. U.S. hegemony provided stability in a way that served Keynesianism more than Lord Keynes had expected—and more than conservative elites wanted.

The result in many countries was a virtuous cycle that funded the welfare state: greater employment, rising wages, and market competition spurred investments to increase productivity; as productivity rose, workers in a tight labor market won still higher wages; better wages boosted aggregate demand that in turn sustained employment. Social critics, of course, pointed to real problems: consumerism, alienation, vacuous mass culture, environmen-

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tal degradation, persistent North/South inequality, neocolonialism, and U.S. imperialism. Yet within the successful Keynesian economies, workers shared the benefits of rising productivity, and citizens gained fundamental security through the welfare state.

Things fall apart. Most commentators agree on the list of factors that pulled the system down: export rivalry from newly industrialized nations where labor unions were weak or outlawed; inflation exported around the world by the United States as it tried to pay for the Vietnam War; slackened commitment to full employment because of that inflation; weakening of the U.S. dollar and, consequently, of the U.S. hegemonic role as world creditor.

Instead of carrying out a Keynesian mission to facilitate growth, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund became the international debt police. They squeezed second and third world economies, constricting global demand. In 1973, the Nixon administration threw out the fixed exchange rates of Bretton Woods. Over the next decade or so, the United States pressured other countries to decontrol their financial systems. U.S. elites believed that given complete freedom in international finance, they could reestablish their hegemony. Instead they made instability a key characteristic of the period.

Everything Keynes warned would happen did happen. The virtuous cycle that funded the welfare state has been replaced by a downward spiral: falling wages reduce aggregate demand, production slows down, unemployment rises; this increases the need for government transfer payments but shrinks the tax base; welfare state expenditures and government investments are cut; demand falls further. As growth slows around the world, international competition intensifies; wages are held down everywhere, and in second and third world countries, wages don't reflect productivity gains; demand falters; high unemployment becomes chronic; markets are glutted; trade barriers go up. In a globalized economy, labor standards converge, but now they converge downward. The welfare state comes under permanent siege.

Given this most un-Keynesian context—call it global Thatcherism—progressives in elected office usually fail to upgrade or even protect the welfare state. Their embittered radical supporters inevitably scream bad faith, cowardice, collusion with economic elites, and incompetence. No doubt, these play a role in many cases, but to ignore the slender autonomy of an individual national government in today's global market is to deny reality.

A few years ago, many leftists thought regional markets governed by social charters would solve the autonomy problem. If, for example, the European Union (EU) set high standards for welfare provision and labor relations, it would create the equivalent of a strong welfare state in a market large enough to sustain autonomous policies for growth. A regional social charter sounded like a good idea; it *is* a good idea. But alone it can't save the welfare state.

At present, the EU provides modest subsidies to support its weakest members. But suppose the Union set up a rigorous charter that required all members to meet fairly high welfare and labor standards. Weak nations—for example, Portugal—would need much more help. The aid would have to come from wealthier members—let's say, Germany. The German government could either cut back its own welfare state to help pay for Portugal's or it could raise taxes on its own citizens. The German electorate would almost certainly reject either solution.

Suppose instead that the EU adopted a social charter with standards as low as those of the weakest member or a charter with fine principles and no teeth (the latter pretty well describes the actual social policy of the EU). Capital might move to Portugal to take advantage of lower wages and taxes. In the best-case scenario, those investments would translate into jobs; workers would organize and win higher wages; tax revenues would increase to pay for a better welfare state; and then . . . investments would seek out lower wages in, say, South Korea. If workers there managed to organize and win more, the capital would move to Malaysia. The point is simple: in a global market where capital is

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hypermobile, regional charters without capital controls aren't sufficient to protect the welfare state.

Some prominent European theorists believe the left should abandon the welfare state once and for all and escape the "logic of capital." Their alternative is a *welfare society* that breaks the link between work and income. The scheme looks like this: the government would guarantee everyone an income; some people would do traditional jobs, others would be busy with alternative activities; some would work full time, others part time; some would work for a few months or years, others would take over for them. Sufficient income for society would come from some highly productive sectors that competed successfully in the global market. The definition of work would change, as would people's attitude toward it.

The remarkable thing about this proposal is that it defies good sense in so many domains—economics, politics, psychology, ethics, history. To start, what are these hyperproductive sectors that will generate wealth for an entire society? If they existed, one assumes hard-pressed governments would already be using them to shore up the welfare state. What makes the technology or skills required so exclusive and nonexportable that a society could count on keeping the jobs? U.S.-based transnational corporations now ship sophisticated software design jobs to India and Poland. Weren't those the jobs supposedly reserved for the first world?

The welfare society has as little political feasibility as economic potential. Few people in income-producing sectors would vote for a program requiring them to support "able-bodied" men and women who didn't work in the traditional sense or who put in less time or less effort. The project presupposes humans with radically different priorities, values, and psychological capacities for solidarity. Parts of the left have always built their models on "the new man and woman." It's an unsound foundation.

The welfare society raises the same questions as older, discredited propositions. Without any income incentive, why would a sufficient number of people (or anyone, for that matter) scrub hotel bathrooms, resurface highways, or sell towels at Macy's—especially while others wrote poetry, painted landscapes, and picked up a regular paycheck? Would everyone take turns doing the grubby but essential jobs? Who would decide what's essential? Suppose someone refused essential work. Would society coerce that individual? Would everyone receive the same income? If not, who would decide income levels? On what basis? What would insulate the decisions from political manipulation?

As markets shifted, the welfare society would need new income-producing sectors. But who would select and develop them if income weren't linked to work? The welfare society seems to require extensive planning of the kind that has already been a historic flop. The model conjures up a vision not of greater freedom but of bureaucracy, stagnation, and state intrusion.

This unpromising scheme grows out of legitimate and pressing concerns. Europeans face structural unemployment of 10 percent or more in the most prosperous countries of the West; young people can't find jobs. The East European nations have even greater reserves of unemployed people, and they will work for less, driving down wages in the West. Seeing no solution to the problem, some radicals have given up on the traditional left goal of full employment. They've pushed economic measures such as the reduced work week and work sharing (today used as partial or stopgap responses to unemployment) to their logical limit. Their welfare society is actually an immense expansion of the welfare state. The effort is understandable but unconvincing.

Over the last decade or so, left support has grown for a more coherent idea: a Keynesian world order designed to fit the current globalized economy. This means reestablishing a virtuous cycle of high employment, rising wages, economic growth, and welfare-state development in the context of liberalized world trade. (A word about growth: leftists usually recognize that growth must be "ecologically sensitive," that is, economic activity must integrate both repairing and protecting the

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environment. As many experts point out, the process is likely to generate new technology and jobs.)

This position is so sensible, so persuasive, so obvious, even, that one feels compelled to ferret out the difficulties. A new global Keynesianism will require at least a loose consensus among the economically powerful nations (the United States, Japan, and Germany) in favor of expansionary policies. We've heard good rhetoric on the subject. For example, presidential candidate Clinton's conception of a new world order sounded nicely Keynesian. In reality, however, individual national governments bend to the will of financial markets. These latter now function as autocrats in a peculiarly anthropomorphized way ("the markets are jittery . . . the markets reacted badly . . . the markets want to see . . ."). Unfortunately, the markets loathe Keynes. Somehow—no one knows how—consensus for full employment and sustaining aggregate demand must grow strong enough to buck the markets.

Global Keynesianism will also require either new international institutions or revised mandates for the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In addition to providing resources for growth, they would have to slow down and shrink capital flows, which means getting the largest of the genies back in the bottle. Adequate instruments exist in the abstract—transaction taxes, stiffer banking regulations, fixed currency exchange rates—but not much can happen until the major economies act in concert.

Labor movements are another problem. In the past, workers benefited from rising productivity by organizing unions to win higher wages. As a result, a growing economy generated revenue for the welfare state, while labor applied political pressure to win reforms. Thus unions figured prominently in the Keynesian equation. What characterizes the current period is not so much the conservative assault on unions (that's happened before), but the lack of interest, even hostility, of many working people and progressives.

In Sweden, unions once stood high in public opinion; citizens believed that the labor movement acted in society's general interest. Now many Swedes believe unions represent less constructive, narrow interests. Since about 85 percent of the work force belongs to unions, the criticism comes in part from members. In Italy, unions have not only lost membership, they've become more fragmented as independent local organizations draw employees away from the established confederations. Narrow interests often do prevail, and public support for labor has declined. More than before, attitudes all across Europe are tinged with the apathy and antagonism that are an old story in the United States.

The typical relationship between labor and the so-called new social movements (the feminist, environmental, gay rights, and cultural identity movements) has been neither consistently close nor highly productive. There's no news here. More noteworthy is the growing distance since the early 1980s between unions in many countries and the left-of-center political parties that built the welfare state (consider Britain, the United States, Italy, and even Sweden). In office or trying to get there, the parties have less to offer labor; as they look for ways to cut spending or placate the markets, they frequently oppose union demands.

Since labor unions have been powerful advocates of the welfare state, the spreading antagonism toward them undermines the welfare state's prospects. In addition, a new Keynesian order will require wages to rise significantly in the second and third worlds where labor unions are often unfree or suppressed. This places another burden on first world unions: they must hold themselves together and at the same time direct attention and resources to developing countries.

Global Thatcherism gave the right a new angle on demonizing the welfare state: not only do government handouts suck the energy out of a nation and eat away its moral fiber, they cripple its performance in the world market. The left can't defend the welfare state by arguing *only* that it produces social justice that, in turn, makes democracy meaningful.

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The welfare state also has to be defended as a structural mechanism promoting economic growth. It sustains aggregate demand and, more useful in argument, increases productivity. For example, public education, worker retraining, and apprenticeship programs improve skills; child care and home care for the elderly allow more women to enter the labor market; health care reduces the waste of human resources.

Another argument for the welfare state is the link between equality and growth. Recent studies of the Asian economic "miracles" show that reducing the gap between rich and poor produces faster per capita income growth nationwide. The poor use additional resources to better themselves and their children economically, and this benefits society as a whole. The studies happily contradict the standard doctrine that growth in developing nations and rising inequality were linked. By redistributing wealth in the direction of greater equality, the welfare state can promote growth.

So much for the less problematic arguments. More difficult questions revolve around an issue that makes many leftists uncomfortable: efficiency. Michael Harrington often pointed out that the generation of Danes who fought for and won sick pay used the benefit only when they were sick; the next generation began to abuse the system. Then there's the well-worn example of skyrocketing absentee rates in workplaces all over Europe on the Mondays after big soccer games.

Swedish industrialists claim they open new plants abroad because absentee rates in Sweden are too high; they can't maintain quality because they don't know who will show up for work. Perhaps this is just "boss talk" to intimidate workers; perhaps it's only a cover for an embarrassing lack of economic patriotism. Yet absentee rates in a Volvo plant in Goteborg dropped from 15 percent a few years ago to less than 5 percent after the sick-pay system was adjusted (*New York Times*, October 4, 1994). The reform, passed by a conservative government in December 1992, delayed the start of sick pay until the second day of missed work.

According to Assar Lindbeck,* Sweden's most prominent mainstream economist, welfare-state insurance programs need deductibles of some kind to deal with abuse and inefficiency. Some leftists (this writer included) would agree as long as deductibles remain small enough for lower-income people to manage without hardship. But other leftists see any reduction of benefits as a class-biased attack on welfare-state redistribution. This makes it easy to stake out a position, but it won't protect the welfare state for long.

Cost and efficiency can turn into impossible political dilemmas for responsible left parties. Lindbeck recounted an incident of the September 1994 Swedish election campaign: The polls showed the Social Democratic party (SAP) at about 50 percent and headed for a big victory that would put them back into government. To deal with a gargantuan budget deficit accumulated during the recession (under the conservative government), the SAP proposed a benefits adjustment. Working parents, who get sixty days sick-child leave per child each year with compensation, would not be paid for the first day missed. The response was outrage. The SAP fell to 45 percent in one week and withdrew the proposal.

The composition of welfare-state expenditures poses another problem. In theory, it makes sense to spend on labor market policies (worker education, skills training, job placement, relocation) that raise employment levels and productivity, rather than transfer payments (unemployment compensation, public assistance for the poor). But in a world organized around the cost-cutting principle, good jobs aren't waiting for newly trained workers. Courses and programs often become holding pens for the long-term unemployed. Although they are still preferable to the misery of inadequate transfer payments, labor market policies can't function effectively unless there is enough economic growth to generate jobs.

* Assar Lindbeck made the comments summarized here during a seminar at Columbia University in New York City on October 3, 1994.

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John Maynard Keynes, living in 1995 and speaking on *MacNeil/Lehrer*, would propose nothing less than turning global Thatcherism upside down. Conservatives would holler that he meant to overthrow the economic laws of the universe. He might well reply that he wanted only this: to translate need into demand. A new virtuous cycle of economic growth, full employment, and rising wages would permit people who needed apartments, milk, overcoats, penicillin, math courses, child care, and refrigerators to make acquisitions in the market and fund the welfare state. The virtuous cycle wouldn't require an elaborate economic apparatus. Indeed, a stable system of pegged exchange rates, institutions to regulate international capital flows and curb risky banking practices, mechanisms to lighten the debt burden of third world nations, and democratic labor unions might suffice.

Since global Thatcherism makes the rich richer, they need everyone else to believe that the system, like hurricane season, is beyond human control. But political choices, not economic inevitability, produced the current mess. Reckless currency speculation, for example, would stop tomorrow morning if governments restabilized exchange rates. In general, Keynes could have his way if the U.S., Japanese, and German governments committed themselves to worldwide growth while jostling other governments to do the same.

A Keynesian world order, if it ever came about, would be a loose, unevenly realized affair—an agreement among economic leaders, resting on a few assumptions, a few regulations, and a couple of refurbished institutions. It's not too much to hope for, and yet a sober assessment must conclude that everything right now is moving in the opposite direction: the predatory search for markets, fierce competition, beggar-thy-neighbor policies, social strife within nations, restrictive trade practices, risky banking practices, and uncontrolled speculation.

For many observers, this period bears a worrisome resemblance to the years after the First World War. If there is a pattern here, perhaps a Keynesian world order lies *somewhere* up ahead. Of course, it took cataclysmic events—the Great Depression and the Second World War—to create an opening for Lord Keynes. Carrying out another round of reforms without economic collapse or global conflagration would count as progress of a revolutionary kind. □

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THE EDITORS □

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Claus Offe

FULL EMPLOYMENT: ASKING THE WRONG QUESTION?

When we call something a problem, we are implying that a solution can be found. We are sending a signal that if we just think hard enough, consult the right experts, establish the right priorities, and then act decisively, we cannot fail to find a solution. And we know when we have found the solution because all at once the problem is gone.

Unemployment should not be described as a "problem" but as a grim phenomenon. It is not a problem because full employment can no longer be realistically expected, and therefore does not represent a solution one can responsibly dangle before people. It does no good to address this painful and chronic condition with the full-employment rhetoric beloved by Germany's Social Democratic party. We will simply have to get used to the idea that a large part of our adult population of both sexes will not find a berth or bread in "normal" jobs. The key question remains whether and how we can structure this situation to minimize its social and political impact.

Unemployment exists when more people are looking for jobs than can find them. This imbalance can be interpreted in two ways: either the demand for workers is "too low" or the supply is "too large." Our experts in economic and social policy automatically gravitate toward the first interpretation. The conclusion usually drawn in our post-Keynesian era is that the cost of labor (that is, wages plus benefits) must be reduced or the incentives increased for employers to create (domestic) jobs—whatever the effect on wages.

As regards reducing the cost of employment, the prevailing supply-oriented theories proceed from the assumption that "cheaper" labor automatically yields more jobs. They say the cost of employment must approach an "equilibrium wage," defined as one that uses up the available labor. That is false reasoning, because in every developed economy there are actually two equilibrium wages, which lie far apart. The equilibrium wage that clears out the labor market differs drastically from the equilibrium wage that would also clear out the commodity market; and if the commodity market is not cleared out, the labor market cannot be, either. If the goods produced cannot be marketed, that will lead to "too low" a demand for labor.

To put it another way, wages represent not only a cost to the employer but also income for the employees' households. When economists focus narrowly on one or the other of these two functions of wages, they cannot avoid the dispiriting conflict that pits the "right-wing liberal" supply-oriented theories, which call for reducing the cost of wages, against the "left-wing Keynesian" demand-oriented recipes, which defend real wage income or even want to see it increased—both in the name of achieving or restoring "full employment."

This debate is fruitless because, although many theoretical considerations support the supply-side doctrine, the harsh institutional realities of wage-distribution policy in the German Federal Republic stand on the side of demand theory. Since the end of the 1970s, "supply-oriented" economic doctrine has prevailed in Europe, and Keynesianism has lost

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almost all intellectual and practical currency. The five reasons are well known. First, globalization of economic relations and the system of floating exchange rates have rendered futile any attempt to sustain national economic hegemony by Keynesian means. Second, Keynesian demand policy proves effective only when imposed "unexpectedly." When it becomes routine government practice, it leads only to subsidies for investors, not also to an increase in employment—and furthermore to the last three causes for the defeat of Keynesianism: inflation, increased national debt, and a lack of financial capital and higher investment costs.

But German institutional realities (that is, wage-scale autonomy; unified unions; regional wage agreements; the costs of Social Security, tied to income and shared proportionally by employers and employees) were intended to, and in the past actually did help to, create in the Federal Republic a highly productive economy based on industrial exports. High-quality products were produced by highly qualified and highly paid workers under highly regulated working conditions (and with a ratcheted-up pay scale). All this took place under the umbrella of a relatively robust social harmony, which the proponents of this "Deutschland Model" praised as a "fourth production factor" unique to the German economy. In this model, strong labor unions are welcome, for they provide the push toward rationalization needed to promote modernization throughout the economy. They are all the more welcome because in Germany they have contributed to the creation of working conditions that can only be described as deluxe in comparison to those of the United States, France, and Spain.

Yet we can speak of these conditions of prosperity and full employment only in the past tense. The reasons are also well known. Let me recall them under the heading of "threefold globalization."

First of all, the economic integration of Western Europe brings not only intensified competition to commodities and labor markets, but also a loss of national hegemony in the realm of economic and social policy. This loss provides a fairly watertight excuse for doing nothing. The question "What should be done?" becomes irrelevant, to a large extent simply because not one of the individual nations could go it alone. It remains to be seen whether what the member countries of the European Union (EU) can no longer do on their own can be done by integrated European institutions and policies.

Second, the productivity of the East Asian economies is not only steadily destroying the competitive advantage the German economy once derived from its infrastructure and technology; it is also making certain disadvantages of location all the more obvious, at least for the Federal Republic.

And third, since the end of the cold war, not only the Iron Curtain countries but also the Western European capitalist countries have become "postcommunist": the latter must adjust to the immediate proximity of economic systems in which the training of the work force may be almost on a par with their own, but where the cost of labor, at least for the present, amounts to only about one-seventh (for example, in the Czech Republic). Besides, now that state socialism is gone, there is far less incentive in the West to maintain full employment and generous social benefits so as to keep the population happy, immune to the blandishments of the "other side."

Altogether, this postcommunist globalization results in persistently high levels of unemployment within the European Union. Successful employment policies in individual countries or regions are achieved only at the cost of mounting unemployment in other countries. The logic of "jobless growth" divorces growth in the economy from growth in employment. The societies of the European Union countries are still wealthy—that is the difference between the present situation and the worldwide depression at the end of the 1920s. But they lack an institutional mechanism that would allow them to distribute their wealth to all their citizens. For the vast majority of the population the rule is this: only if you have income from work or family or Social Security can you claim a share in your country's wealth.

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What we are experiencing in Europe as a reaction to this situation is a policy of more or less controlled reduction of the costs of employment and Social Security. Under pressure from the world market, the EU countries are breaking away from deluxe working conditions and high income levels. This transformation is also supported politically by a growing "capitalist popular front" with a defensive strategy aimed at increasing employment by cutting wages. Recent agreements to shorten the work week together with wage cuts indicate a drastic change of scene in German industrial relations and wage-scale policy; only a short time ago they would have been completely unacceptable. Yet it remains to be seen whether this solution will succeed even in stabilizing employment. In this same context belongs the courageous suggestion of a prominent social democratic theorist, Fritz Scharpf, that a low-wage sector be created in the German economy, with wages subsidized from tax revenues; yet we have no indication that employers would even be interested in creating such low-cost jobs, nor is it certain that—if they were—they could be counted on to fill these jobs chiefly with newly hired workers, and with Germans rather than guest-workers. Only if employers can be coaxed over these hurdles by the lure of wage subsidies will the promised positive effects on domestic unemployment be achieved.

Guaranteed Base Income

Base-income models differ in one important respect from all the suggestions for negative taxation of income in the low-income sector, which amount to a reduction in wages without a corresponding reduction in income: in base-income models, income transfer is tied not to individual circumstances (need, current employment, willingness and ability to work, and so on), but exclusively to citizenship and possibly to the person's age. This arrangement has the advantage that income transfer is no longer subject to fluctuations in the demand for labor; instead, income transfer goes into effect—and with it a reduction in manifest unemployment—as soon as citizens choose to take advantage of it. They can decide, according to personal circumstances and the state of the labor market, whether they want to add to their subsistence income by taking a regular job. Organizing income transfer in such a fashion would make allowances for the fact that, because of lack of suitability and lack of demand, many workers can never be permanently integrated into the labor market, even at extremely low wages. It makes no sense to pretend otherwise, thereby subjecting them to a lasting, humiliating experience of failure.

Current initiatives and proposals on labor-market and wage policies have one thing in common: their thrust is defensive. At best they preserve existing jobs but do not create any new ones. Perhaps they encourage employers to hire workers or not to lay employees off; but when reductions in real wages result, it becomes more difficult for the producers of consumer goods to sell their wares. That leaves unanswered the question of whether, and for how long, a policy of deliberately dismantling the extensive rights to employment and social protections that German workers enjoy will be able to forestall those desperate reactions already manifesting themselves: on one hand, a left-wing militant struggle for government protection of jobs, on the other a right-wing chauvinistic struggle for government protection against "foreign" workers seeking employment. If such struggles became a mass phenomenon, in one version or the other, we would presumably be facing challenges on a scale almost unknown in Europe since the Second World War. Not only would the equitable distribution of social wealth be at stake, but also the survival of democratic institutions and political processes.

Such are the grim perspectives that present themselves when one clings to the notion that a steady volume of wage earners must be supplied at declining prices and squeezed into jobs. A different, much less common reading of the imbalance in the labor market is this: what we need is not an increase in the number of jobs but a reduction in the volume of work (the product of employment-seeking persons

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and the number of work hours per person). The mechanisms with which one could achieve this can be quickly enumerated. First comes actual prohibition on workers' entering the labor market, specifically foreigners and (married) women; for legal and moral reasons this measure cannot be implemented. Any possibility of influencing the labor supply through control of personnel must be dismissed. What remains is control of work time; the supply can be rationed per day, per week, per year, per life in such a way that—all other conditions remaining constant—an oversupply of labor could be reduced or perhaps avoided altogether for the future.

In the mid-eighties, this conceptual model dominated the policy toward work time. Its weakness is that in practice it becomes "morally stressful" for the employed themselves to adhere to this model. Why should I agree to work shorter hours (and thereby give up income or raises) just so that you can also get work, especially when it is not even certain that the employer will (or can) reward my sacrifice? Will he really translate my and others' reduced work time into a larger (or even just a stable) work force? If not, then all of us might end up worse off than before.

The result is that on the supply side of the labor market little can be accomplished, either through control of available personnel or through control of work time. That will remain true as long as society holds that the value and success of an individual's life manifest themselves on the labor market and in his or her prosperity as a wage earner. This concept of normality is as wrongheaded as it is compelling. It is wrongheaded because it drives many people into a rat-race in which they can only lose. It is compelling, on the other hand, because in our work-oriented society the dominant institutions in fact reserve the things that make life worth living (freedom, independence, security, recognition, self-esteem) for those people who prove themselves in economic life as earners. Those who fail (by being unemployed) to fulfill the norm or decide not to adhere to it (for instance, mothers, or "mere housewives," or house husbands) need pretty good justifications if they want to avoid appearing to be losers to themselves and others. Anyone who does not work at least intermittently or part-time incurs considerable disadvantages as far as income and security are concerned—and often moral (self-) condemnation as well.

The moral, cultural, and institutional foundations of work-oriented society reward the wage earner, but many citizens are no longer eligible for these rewards. Society mobilizes a constant surplus of labor that it cannot absorb, cannot use for the production of goods and services. Meanwhile, the notion that one can share in the commodities and values of life only if one has successfully marketed one's own labor has become morally indefensible. What justifies the idea that the sum total of useful activities a human being can perform must pass through the needle's eye of an employment contract? Or that it is fair to limit opportunities for consumption, Social Security, and social standing to those who have won them on the labor market?

One argument for full employment gaining increasing, if sometimes openly cynical, support suggests that the integration of the largest possible number of people into the labor market is desirable not for reasons of social justice but for reasons of social control. The pessimistic view of human nature that underlies this argument is plain: if human beings do not work under supervision and within the framework of formal contractual obligations, they will necessarily fall into a chaotic way of life. To be sure, this argument retroactively discredits the humane value of earlier technical and economic progress that liberated people from back-breaking work. At the same time it tacitly recognizes the wretchedness of a social order that cannot keep its citizens in line except through structured labor.

In this situation, praise of a modest way of life does not prove very helpful. Assuring people that it can be very satisfying to "do something meaningful for others" in the family or in volunteer work or to enjoy a contemplative existence will hardly persuade them to stay home by the hearth. For, as Brecht says, circumstances just ain't that way. On the contrary: the citizens of our work-oriented society find the material and immaterial

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rewards attached to the allegedly "normal" existence of the wage earner too attractive for significant numbers of them to consider giving up full-time work and the corresponding income. Indeed, the more unlikely it becomes that every adult will be able to find and keep a secure, satisfying, and well-paying job, the more frantic and aggressive the competition becomes—between generations, sexes, ethnic groups—for this "supreme good." Some conservative prophets, noting the overwhelming value placed on formal work, believe that life outside the labor market (in the family, in the community, in one's own garden, in cooperatives, networks, and associations) would have to be revalued far more than can be done by moralistic praise for renunciation, modest expectations, and a sense of community. The revaluation of leisure and the self-determined activity with which it might be filled or, conversely, the societal devaluation of the labor market, is a project that goes to the moral, institutional, and economic heart of democratic industrial societies. These societies have no clue as to how to confront the problem that their wealth is being produced by a declining percentage of their citizens, but that all citizens claim an adequate share of this wealth. One need not be a seer to recognize the central problem with which the institutions of economic society will be preoccupied for the foreseeable future, nationally as well as globally. The segments of the population that create economic value will be shrinking; the family, welfare-state, and development-aid conduits will be drying up—conduits that once provided the means of subsistence and opportunities for participation to persons and regions outside the "productive core" of the global economy.

Economic Rights

As long as almost all wage earners are involved in producing wealth, the problem of sharing wealth is solved by way of each individual's job. Once this ceases to be the case, and this supposedly normal condition has disappeared for good, the problem of distribution can be solved only by establishing specific economic rights that all citizens grant to each other.

A system of this sort can be articulated in terms of three principles. First: no one has the right to exclude entire categories of the population (according to sex, age, nationality, qualifications, and so on) from participation in the labor market.

Second: since adult citizens do not have a "right to work" but instead a right to compete for employment, then all those who voluntarily withdraw from the competition are doing a favor to all those who remain, whose chances are correspondingly improved. Those who withdraw deserve compensation for the duration of their nonparticipation in the labor market. It should come in the form of a right to a base income, without any further conditions (such as need, willingness to work, family circumstances), and should be financed from taxes, at a level commensurate with a modest way of life.

Third: compensation for withdrawing from the labor market, about which individuals can change their mind at any time, should not simply reward people for taking their labor out of the economy. It should encourage them to put their labor to uses other than selling it in return for wages.

True, outside the intimate circle of the family, such possibilities are not so easy to find. For as the industrial societies have developed, they have tended to force workers into a "modernization trap": for a long time, the labor market appeared so much more rewarding than any informal and self-sufficient forms of activity that these largely died out, and now, when the market can no longer absorb the volume of available labor, they are not there in reserve for a subsistence economy. Accordingly, there is no reason to expect that alternative forms of useful activity will crop up spontaneously or on command; they must be reinvented, sponsored, and encouraged.

Systematic reordering of work according to such principles would not eliminate unemployment. But since it is unlikely that there will ever again be enough work to go around, we should embrace an arrangement that will create tolerable conditions and thereby lessen the likelihood of social conflict.

Translated from the German by
KRISHNA WINSTON □

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Thomas E. Weisskopf

MARKET SOCIALISM IN THE EAST

As far back as the "New Economic Policy" initiated by Lenin in the early 1920s to set the war-torn Soviet economy back on its feet, the idea of combining markets with socialist forms of property ownership has had considerable appeal for Communist party (CP) leaders. Indeed, in most of the many historical instances in which a centralized CP-dominated system encountered serious economic problems, reforms were undertaken to reduce the degree of centralization and increase the scope of markets. These reforms rarely went so far as to create a system that could be called "market socialism"—though the experiences of Yugoslavia since the early 1950s, Hungary since the late 1960s, and China more recently do warrant that label. In these latter cases, of course, the CP maintained authoritarian political control and a substantial degree of bureaucratic economic control as well—so these examples were still a far cry from the kind of market socialism proposed by advocates of a democratic "third way."

By the late 1980s, CP-directed socialism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was crumbling. The growing crisis was aggravated by the worldwide economic doldrums of the 1980s, but there could be little doubt that internal economic weaknesses were becoming increasingly serious. CP leaders were well aware of the need for major reform if there was to be a future for any kind of socialism in their countries. In several of the East European nations—notably Poland and Hungary—new decentralizing measures were introduced; and in the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev launched his programs of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, thereby initiating a process of growing marketization and decentralization of political and economic power that would accelerate with each passing year.

Not only were CP leaders increasingly interested in moving their brand of socialism in a more capitalist direction, but many leading dissidents in the East favored a third way for their economies—if and when they would be liberated from the yoke of CP dictatorship. These dissidents sought to combine political democracy with an economic system that would combine the efficiency of market mechanisms with the humanitarian social goals that CP-directed socialism had honored more fully in rhetoric than in reality; and the idea of market socialism resonated well with such an agenda.

In some countries of the East, dissidents found very appealing the notions of worker ownership and workplace democracy—elements of a variant of market socialism that places strong emphasis on self-management. In Poland, the Solidarity Movement in the early 1980s embraced workers' control as an important element of its economic program; and in a number of countries (including the Soviet Union as well as Poland) CP regimes, under pressure from workers and reformers, began to confer greater power on enterprise-level workers' councils. As the momentum for economic reform accelerated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, worker ownership and control of enterprises increasingly appeared as a politi-

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cally and economically promising alternative to conventional forms of capitalist ownership and control.

In the early 1990s, there was a flurry of interest in market socialism in the rapidly changing nations of the East. After the collapse of the old-style hard-line CP regime of Erich Honecker in East Germany, a new generation of reformist leaders came to power (briefly) advocating a market socialist "third way" for East Germany. In Czechoslovakia, Vaclav Havel and some of the intellectuals in his circle of Charter 77 dissidents sought to develop an alternative to what they viewed as the excessive individualism and rampant commercialism of Western capitalist economies. In the Soviet Union, Gorbachev gathered around him economic advisers—such as Leonid Abalkin—who talked openly about converting the Soviet economy to a form of market socialism.

In general, support for market socialism in the East came from professionals active in the reformist wing of the CP or from intellectuals prominent in the underground resistance to the CP. But both these bases of support were soon to be overwhelmed by the forces unleashed by the crumbling of CP authority. A new generation of political leaders and (Western-trained) economists embraced market capitalism, and the most rapid possible transition thereto, with strong support from the West and from indigenous entrepreneurs and speculators. In many countries of the East, the new breed of politicians and economists were welcomed—or at least tolerated—by a substantial fraction of the population eager for economic improvement and ready to believe in the miraculous powers of free enterprise and the market. Thus figures such as Balcerowicz (in Poland), Klaus (in Czechoslovakia), and Gaidar (in Russia) came to the fore, embracing Thatcherite and Reaganite conceptions of capitalism.

Many of the economists and other professionals who at one time had invested their hopes and energies in the promotion of market socialism (with or without worker self-management) now abandoned all interest in a third way. It turned out that for all but a committed minority, the embrace of market socialism had merely represented a marriage of convenience—based on the limits of the possible. Once the ideological barriers to full-fledged capitalism came tumbling down, most intellectuals and professionals abandoned the project of reforming socialism and joined the movement to build a new capitalism.

To be sure, in some countries of the East—for example Romania and Ukraine—the thrust toward capitalism was much weaker, as conservative nationalist leaders limited the pace of privatization and the scope of the market. But these go-slow approaches had little or nothing to do with market socialism. Rather, they were rooted in the effort of much of the CP *nomenklatura* to maintain their privileged status in the old style rather than try to convert it into a favorable position in the new market economy.

By 1992, just a few years after the opportunities for market socialism had seemed so bright, realistic political prospects for a third way seemed to have vanished throughout the East. The Soviet Union had collapsed, and the Yeltsin-Gaidar team in Russia was firmly committed to a rapid transition to capitalism. Two years of "shock therapy" in Poland, begun by Balcerowicz in early 1990, had thrust the economy irreversibly onto the road to capitalism. Klaus had supplanted Havel as the dominant political personality in Czechoslovakia, becoming the darling of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund among political leaders in the East. In those Eastern nations yet to embark on a systematic transformation of their economies, the old socialist system was crumbling and a form of primitive capitalism was emerging in a chaotic manner—in the absence of any well-conceived or strongly supported alternative.

Since 1992, the political tides have again turned, though hardly as dramatically as they did in 1989. In elections in 1993 and 1994 in Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and Hungary, large numbers of voters turned against the most avid free-marketeers and the most enthusiastic pro-capitalists. In a context of continuing

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economic dislocation, declining real incomes for the majority of the population, and increasingly conspicuous inequalities, many people turned to reformist elements of the old CP apparatus and other opposition groups in search of some protection from the ravages of the collapse of the old system and the transition to the new.

Yet the beneficiaries of this backlash against the "big bang" strategy of transition have not been advocates of market socialism. For the most part, the winners in 1993 and 1994 were politicians and parties also committed to a transition to capitalism—but a more gradual one, in which attention is paid to maintaining employment, and public spending is devoted to social programs to cushion the adverse effects of economic change on ordinary people. The programs of these parties have much more in common with social democracy than with market socialism.

A partial exception to this general rule is the growing support (in countries such as Poland and Russia, and now apparently also in Ukraine) for forms of employee ownership as a mechanism of privatization. Although firmly opposed by the first generation of postcommunist leaders, privatization schemes in which employees acquire a majority of the publicly held shares of corporatized former state enterprises have emerged as a popular means for removing these enterprises from government control. These employee-owned enterprises could conceivably provide the foundation for a worker self-managed variant of market socialism. In practice, however, employee ownership of former state enterprises has almost always meant undisputed managerial control. It has in fact served much more as a vehicle for insider "*nomenklatura* privatization" than for the establishment of industrial democracy. It has more to do with the ongoing struggle over the private appropriation of formerly state property rights than with democratic self-management or market socialism.*

In sum, the evidence is strong that the idea of market socialism—as a viable alternative option for the economies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union—is dead. One may be able to identify a few countries of the East (Romania, Uzbekistan?) where the political leadership remains somewhat skeptical of capitalism and might become interested in a genuine alternative. But these are countries in which the influence of old-style CP leaders remains very strong and in which democratic traditions are particularly underdeveloped; thus market socialism, should it ever be introduced, is highly unlikely to take a democratic form that would reflect the aspirations of its most committed devotees.

Obstacles

What accounts for the failure of democratic market socialism in the East? One obvious candidate for an explanation is the absence of a clear and well-worked-out blueprint for such a system. But many of the general ideas underlying market socialism have been circulating for quite some time, and indeed advocates could be found in virtually every postcommunist country. What needs to be explained is the evident difficulty of developing a strong political constituency in the more open political arenas of the postcommunist societies.

First of all, consider the advocates of market socialism themselves. They consist for the most part of well-educated professionals, government officials, skilled workers, and labor leaders—but in every country of the East they constitute only a small minority of their peer group. Because of their small numbers (and lack of disproportionate resources), they are not in a position to prevail in open political competition without a large and/or powerful set of political allies.

One might argue that market socialism has in

* When I presented to a conference in Moscow a paper advocating the transformation of state-owned enterprises into democratic self-managed firms, the labor-oriented participants showed little interest in the provisions for one-person–one-vote workplace democracy; their main concern was to assure that enterprise assets would remain under the control of insiders—including management as well as the leadership of workers' organizations—rather than be open to acquisition by outsiders.

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fact a very large latent constituency in the poorer classes of society, for they stand to benefit from its redistributive implications. Workers, moreover, might well be attracted to variants of market socialism involving substantial elements of self-management. But here another obstacle arises: the complexity of the concepts and mechanisms of democratic market socialism. It is not easy to explain in simple and compelling terms how a market socialist economy would work to benefit the majority, particularly in the case of the relatively sophisticated versions of market socialism that offer the best prospects for combining economic efficiency with social justice. Nor is it easy to show how self-management will yield palpable gains for workers. It is far simpler to make a case for social democratic modifications of capitalism as a way of meeting the economic interests of the poor or to interest workers in forms of employee ownership that are much closer to syndicalist capitalism than to market socialism.

The unfortunate fact is that the political prospects for market socialism tend to be brightest when authoritarian regimes in control of socialist economies begin to loosen up—when their leaders become receptive to experiments designed to improve the nation's economic performance without compromising their own political authority. Under these circumstances, the leaders provide opportunities for intellectuals and professionals to devise the kind of decentralizing reforms—in the context of society-wide economic regulation—that characterize market socialism. This was the case in the few sustained historical examples of market socialism—for example, Yugoslavia from the 1950s, Hungary from the late 1960s, and China under Deng Xiao-Ping. Yet in none of these cases were authoritarian regimes prepared to allow the degree of political liberalization needed to undergird a democratic form of market socialism.

Once the preconditions for political democracy have been established with the collapse of CP-dominated regimes, the impetus for market socialism tends to be lost for two reasons. First, many of those who supported it on pragmatic grounds jump ship and join the movement for full-fledged capitalism. Second, and even more important, the legacy of a discredited state apparatus looms as an enormous obstacle to popular support for a socioeconomic system involving a critical role for the state.

This last point can hardly be over-emphasized. Clearly the establishment and operation of a market socialist economy involves a continuing role for the state and its officials—albeit one that is much more subtle, indirect, and benign than running an administered socialist economy. Yet the state has been so discredited in the East by the years of CP bureaucratic domination that it can no longer plausibly present itself as an instrument of effective and beneficent social engineering. Popular cynicism about the role of government in the economy, in the wake of the manifestly self-serving, corrupt, and obtuse behavior of its representatives under CP regimes, is perfectly understandable. But it poses a huge obstacle to advocates of democratic market socialism in their efforts to rally support for their cause.

To be sure, many citizens of Eastern nations, suddenly exposed to the inequalities and insecurities of an unregulated market system, have started to long for a return to greater order amid the unfamiliar and unsettling chaos. There is evidence of growing sympathy for a "strong ruler" to set things right again. But this reaction can hardly be interpreted as a new sense of confidence in the ability of public officials to manage the economic affairs of a nation in a democratic framework. This kind of popular sentiment points more surely toward an authoritarian form of capitalism than toward a democratic form of socialism.

The Inhospitable Environment

Let us suppose now that the political obstacles to the establishment of democratic market socialism can somehow be overcome. Is it plausible to suppose that such a system would survive and prosper in the environment of the postcommunist societies of the East?

I believe that the answer is probably negative—because the institutional and cultural

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context bequeathed by CP-directed socialist societies is in too many ways incompatible with the requirements for the successful operation of a democratic market socialist economy. The failure of the Soviet-type system was not necessarily a failure of socialism; as Roemer, Shweickart, and others have forcefully argued, socialism can work if it is embedded in (robust) democracy and markets rather than in authoritarianism and commands. But a society emerging from authoritarianism and commands is ill-equipped to make democracy and markets work effectively, and it is also ill-equipped to sustain the sensitive state role in setting limits to the operation of free markets that represents the essence of the socialist project in a market environment.

That it will be very difficult to establish effective democracies in postcommunist societies is a perfectly commonplace observation. The *forms* of democracy can be and in most cases have been introduced in the East: more-or-less free elections, a relatively free press, political parties, and so on. What is widely recognized to be lacking are the underlying *institutions* that sustain a vital democracy: strong organizations representing and serving various interest groups, reliable sources of information for citizens, opportunities for meaningful debate and discussion of issues. Also lacking—and just as important—are a social culture in which individuals believe they can make a difference and have some incentive to participate in political activity and a political culture in which politicians are ready to negotiate and compromise in order to satisfy partially many interests rather than impose totally a single interest. Because the CP monopolized the political arena so completely, suppressing most manifestations of civil society, the institutions and culture undergirding democracy must be built up virtually from scratch in the East. This is a time-consuming process—and it will take even longer in the nations of the former Soviet Union that were dominated by the CP for seventy years than it will in Eastern Europe, where CP dominance began only after the Second World War.

It will be just as difficult and time-consuming a process to develop an effective market system. To be sure, the market mentality—Adam Smith's "propensity to truck and barter"—never disappeared under CP rule, and all kinds of markets have mushroomed in the East since the command system collapsed. But it is one thing for myriad transactions to take place between buyers and sellers; it is quite another for such transactions to work "as if by an invisible hand" to coordinate the independent actions of atomistic individuals and achieve a significant degree of overall economic efficiency.

To function effectively a market system must be embedded in a general culture of honesty and trust; it must also be embedded in institutions that limit problems of malfeasance and, more generally, the transactions costs of market operations. What is needed is a comprehensive institutional structure of laws, regulations, and sanctions that support an ethic of personal responsibility. This in turn helps to channel people's self-seeking instincts into activities that create new wealth rather than simply redistributing old wealth.

To be efficient a market system must also find ways to limit the incidence and avoid the negative consequences of "market failures" arising from public goods, externalities, and other well-known sources of divergence between private and social benefits and costs. Depending on the context, market failures may best be alleviated by the extension or redefinition of private property rights, by state regulation or intervention, or by voluntary mechanisms of cooperation. But each of these solutions depends on an appropriate institutional or cultural framework: institutions backing up property rights and/or state programs, or "cultures of cooperation" of the kind that can be built up only through frequent interactions among relatively equal members of a community.

In the absence of the appropriate institutions and culture, market participants will have to devote substantial resources to such nonproductive activities as security and contract enforcement; rent-seeking activities will tend to displace productive activities; and private

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benefits and costs will depart significantly from social benefits and costs. This is precisely the case now in the East. New legal and regulatory institutions are woefully underdeveloped; extreme individualism, widespread distrust, and opportunism are rampant; and market failures are largely ignored. As a result, the costs of doing honest business are very high, and the economic efficiency gains from a decentralized market system are very hard to realize.

The obstacles to effective democracy and markets in the East are just as sobering for the prospects of a democratic form of capitalism as they are for democratic market socialism; they suggest that the early hopes and expectations of many Western reformers for a rapid transition to a Western-style economic system were naive at best.* But there is good reason to suspect that conditions in the East are even less hospitable to democratic market socialism than to some forms of capitalism. This is because, first of all, democratic politics is considerably more important for the success of a democratic market socialist system than it is for the success of a capitalist system; indeed, history provides many examples of capitalist economies that have prospered in the absence of democracy. Second, as compared with democratic forms of capitalism, democratic market socialism calls upon the state to play a particularly sensitive role in order to serve goals such as distributive justice.

To accomplish its tasks under democratic market socialism, the state must be strong enough to set and enforce rules regarding property rights and the operation of markets—in ways that are of course less overbearing and intrusive than under CP-dominated socialism, but which are more extensive than under most forms of capitalism. The state must also be held accountable for its activities to the general citizenry. Yet the environment and the culture in which the state now operates in the East are unfavorable in both these respects.

For one thing, state authority at the national level has been greatly weakened since the collapse of the CP regimes. In most of the postcommunist countries there has been substantial diffusion of political power to regions and localities; and there has been diffusion of effective economic power to former state enterprises (and/or monopolistic associations thereof) and to local government agencies. National governments are having difficulty raising revenues, and they lack resources to undertake programs and even to enforce laws.

Second, all of the countries of the East face grave problems of accountability of the public sector. The legacy of corruption and opportunism among government bureaucrats, and the culture of soft-budget constraints, has made it almost second nature for public officials to serve particular private rather than general public interests. Mechanisms and attitudes that would support effective monitoring of the actions of public officials are largely lacking.

Economic development and transformation in the East must therefore rely, by default, largely on initiatives from below. Because of the decline in the authority and legitimacy of the state, political leaders and national economic decision-makers will have relatively little influence over the course of events. To the dismay of anyone who wants rational, ordered, and equitable change—including all advocates of market socialism—the countries of the East seem most likely to be in for a Hayekian process of spontaneous and chaotic change motivated largely by individual self-interest, constrained less by conscious social engineering than by the pressures of an increasingly powerful global capitalist economy.

Concluding Observations

My conclusions about the prospects for democratic market socialism in the East are very pessimistic indeed—especially for those (myself included) who believe in the kind of social rationality, responsibility, and justice reflected in contemporary models of market socialism. The realities of the Eastern environment appear to be as inhospitable to the preferred models of

* In a few exceptional cases—perhaps the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and Estonia—these hopes may not prove to have been so unfounded. But these exceptions can be attributed in considerable part to the small populations and favorable geographical locations (vis-à-vis the West) of the countries involved.

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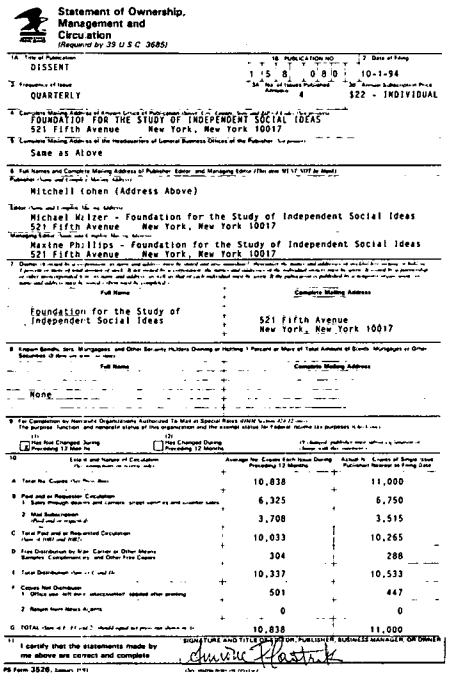
the left as they are to the preferred models of the right. Indeed, because contemporary models of market socialism involve more ambitious goals with respect to democratic decision-making, they face even more daunting obstacles in the chaos of postcommunist societies.

This pessimistic appraisal raises the question: under what conditions could democratic market socialism ever have been or still be expected to succeed—in the East or elsewhere?

I would argue that the prospects for a viable and democratic form of market socialism in the East would have been substantially greater had the effort to establish it occurred as part of a process of gradual transition from CP-directed socialism to a freer economic and political system, rather than in the wake of the total collapse of the communist system. Forward-looking political leaders with substantial authority to bring about fundamental change, ready to listen to and act upon the advice of innovative social and economic reformers, and under strong pressure from an aroused and mobilized citizenry, could conceivably have initiated the kind of fundamental reforms that would introduce democratic and market and (truly) socialist institutions in a gradual, systematic, and ultimately effective way. In such a context, the reform effort would not have had to contend with the private cynicism and opportunism and the governmental corruption and impotence that have plagued contemporary efforts to promote effective democracy, efficient markets, and social justice.

Needless to say, this kind of scenario is enormously demanding and (even without the benefit of hindsight) could never have been considered a very strong historical possibility. Perhaps Czechoslovakia in the "Prague Spring" of the 1960s offered the best historical opportunity for such a scenario. Had Soviet troops not put an end to the experiment, it is possible that a democratic and economically successful form of market socialism could have developed in this little country with relatively strong democratic, market, and socialist traditions, poised between East and West. The Soviet Union under Gorbachev in the late 1980s might be considered another such historical opportunity. But the fact that the USSR had such a long history of authoritarian and bureaucratic rule no doubt made efforts at reform in a democratic market socialist direction all the more problematic. Yugoslavia, Hungary, and China did of course develop forms of market socialism under more favorable conditions than now exist in the East. But these three lacked the critical ingredient of strong democratic traditions and pressures.

I would therefore suggest that, if democratic market socialism is to have a future anywhere, it is most likely to be in those parts of the world where democratic and market institutions and cultures have already been well established. Here the critical missing ingredient is the socialist commitment to greater egalitarianism (and more profound democracy). To be sure, recent political and economic trends in the developed capitalist countries of the world do not suggest any movement in this direction—quite the contrary. Political circumstances have a way of changing over time, however, and they surely change more readily than institutions and culture. It seems to me, therefore, that the long-run prospects for democratic market socialism are best where history has prepared at least some of the institutional and cultural grounds for its successful operation. □



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David Bromwich

CULTURALISM, THE EUTHANASIA OF LIBERALISM

Hume said that absolute monarchy was "the easiest death, the true *Euthanasia*, of the British constitution." I offer some notes and questions about a line of political apologetics that if pursued far would lead to the euthanasia of liberal society. In the past five years, an argument first ventured in academic circles, which associates human dignity with cultural identity, has made deep inroads toward acceptance by liberal theorists. The theorists assent to the culturalist argument from a belief that we ought, as a matter of democratic duty or international realism, to widen our support for acts of membership in identity-cultures. It is understood that in the course of doing so we shall have to modify our idea of the proper duties of the liberal state in keeping with the demands of two constituencies: the speculative thinkers who "construct" the individual to accord with the supposed priority of the group in the making of identity; and the various sects, clans, and dormant nations that serve as bearers of the revived racial and religious enthusiasms clamoring for recognition and for authority throughout the world today. The call is loudest in states without a tradition of liberal government. It would be a good thing, we are asked to agree, for liberal states to answer the call early, and as fully as possible when they feel it close to home.

Culturalism is the thesis that there is a universal human need to belong to a culture—to belong, that is, to a self-conscious group with a known history, a group that by preserving and transmitting its customs, memories, and common practices confers the primary pigment of individual identity on the persons it comprehends. This need, culturalism says, is on a par with the need to be loved by a father and a mother, and with the need for a life of friendships and associations. As I will be compelled to say again and again in these pages, the idea seems to me trivially true. But, taken in the strong sense in which alone it is worth discussing—the sense in which "my culture" is a fact endowed with a dignity and deserving of a respect comparable to the dignity and respect I would claim for myself—the idea seems to me a lie.

The culturalist story acquires its pathos in the usual way, by the personification of an abstract entity. If asked why a liberal theorist would embrace such an idea, I am at a loss; but it is possible to characterize what the theorists are doing when they write with sympathy for the idea of culture. They are trying to shed a habit of irony. They are heeding a wish for compassion from people whose ways, and needs, they are frankly unequipped to understand. The shedding of irony is a gesture that they hope will be taken seriously. Irony, however, seems to be the natural condition of the social critic; and the culturalist idea has imposing consequences for one's sense of what social criticism can be. It brings a characterization of the critic as someone who owes his first loyalty to the community in which his thought, being, and social identity have matured. The critic derives his language, it is said, from this community. Every effort he makes toward a reform of its life and habits will presuppose the critic's rootedness and his desire for continuing

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membership. The critic works to reform a culture from within the culture. How else *could* he work, considering that he knows nothing personally that he does not know culturally?

Michael Walzer has defended this conception of the social critic in two recent books, *The Company of Critics* and *Interpretation and Social Criticism*. I believe a similar picture could be reconstructed from the writings of Charles Taylor and others. But I give most attention to Walzer for two reasons. First, I have a practical interest in social criticism, and a view of it as far less "connected" to the expectations of a community than Walzer believes it to be. Critics, and even reformist leaders like Edmund Burke, Abraham Lincoln, and Martin Luther King, Jr. often startled or shocked their audiences, opted out of the terms set by a given community or a going debate, and thereby changed the meaning of community by enlarging it. As I see it, a decent appreciation of such critics requires that we reject the culturalist idea. To achieve their ends, they required a sense of community that was large because it had been thinned of its racial, religious, and in some cases of its national connections. My second reason for attending to Walzer is that he is the best writer and the clearest presenter of the communitarian idea of criticism, together with its culturalist background. His style is calm, settled, and ameliorative, though it tends to cover its traces by rhetorical turns at moments where crucial choices are made. He writes without obscurantism, quite free of pedantic or theoretical obsessions, and this is a great advantage.

Within liberalism, a congeniality toward illiberal societies *so long as they are real communities* might seem to involve a strange accommodation. If the writers I discuss should persuade many others that such congeniality is a good thing, it will make a lasting difference to what liberalism takes itself to be. I said "illiberal societies." And yet, at just this point the writers in question shift their stress. Community was a baggy enough word, with an admonitory function in a selfish decade. Now we want a word with more substance, and *society* will not do: it suggests a sharp look at social arrangements, at the workings of the judicial system, the state of tax regulations, and so on. *Culture* is more piquant, if shiftier. In practice it gets its force from a literal correlation with region, religion, and race, in ascending order of importance. These visible markers of culture are emphasized by the liberal culturalists, with an eye on their liberal audience, as if the terms actually mattered in descending order. Race, that sine qua non of culture-makers, is frequently left quite out of account, though one may come across delicate mentions of "blood-ties." Culture meanwhile picks up some happier, though still quite vague, associations from a friendly acquaintance with Mardi Gras, museums of folklore, and Ukrainian dance groups in universities. Culture becomes the province not so much of the knife-wielding warlords bent on expelling monsters from the outer regions, as of the necklace-carving, lullaby-singing grandmothers and grandfathers whose full-blooded ministrations give an ancient resonance to the idea of "home." As the argument proceeds I will try to keep in mind those necklaces and lullabies. I ask my readers to listen for the sounds of knives being sharpened.

The first attempt I know by Walzer to sketch a theory of cultural recognition came in his 1990 Tanner Lecture, "Nation and Universe." The case was for a universal right to "human flourishing," which can only be understood in the medium of this or that local variant. Each culture is said to "reiterate" in a different way the general hope or yearning. But the differences of expression count, and are to be honored as large differences. This varied and "reiterative" universalism is set over against the Kantian, or "covering-law" universalism, according to which every choice by an individual ought to be made as if against a background of the twin ideas of autonomy and freedom shared by humanity as a whole. A judgment can be agreed on, Kantian universalism seems to say, no matter how wide the distance between the judge and other potential judges in other settings. By contrast, reiterative universalism points out the difficulties of translation enforced by physical or anthropo-

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logical distance. At the same time, it reserves a place for the particular adaptations or cultural idioms by which ends are realized that may turn out to be universal after all. We iterate, each according to our group's custom, the goods we care about. We look different as we do so, but we are looking differentially for something iterable in other idioms. It will be seen that what this comes to is universalism with a plea for "thick description" of the variants.

It is not clear at first glance what pragmatic difference separates this view from liberal ideas about enlightened judgment that have a less thoroughly culturalist shading. I suspect one main disagreement is at stake. The demand of culturalism is to heighten continually the moral burden of attention to the expressive phenomena of the group. With this demand goes a tactical subordination of, and a growing incapacity to do even rhetorical justice to, the data of personal and temperamental differences. Indeed, I do not see what to make of the shift of attention unless it backs a hypothesis with practical force: that the individual differences that liberalism existed to protect may be less important, because to our eyes less expressively marked, among people who have grown up in illiberal cultures. What those people want, what their leaders assure us they want, seems to be group distinction above all. (At least, that is how it looks in translation.) We therefore do them wrong to impose assumptions about individual personality that we take for granted. Which—it may be asked—is the grosser paternalism: to say "None of our brute individualism for you, in your otherwise flourishing, value-filled cultures"? or to say "We believe personal autonomy to be the final freedom, the aim of the least wicked way of life we can imagine"? Walzer, plainly, would prefer to be neither sort of paternalist, but he is struck by the immodesty of the second assertion. His wish to do justice at all costs to cultural coherence as a good in itself emerges in many choices of words.

A pair of key sentences in "Nation and Universe" sketch a view of the particulars of life that matter most.

> However things are with divine creativity, the values and virtues of human creativity can best be understood in the reiterative mode. Independence, inner direction, individualism, self-determination, self-government, freedom, autonomy: all these can be regarded as universal values, but they all have particularist implications.

The word *particularist* has here been brought in to split the difference between individual and culture; the effort is really *to claim the virtues of an individual life for individual cultures*. The particularisms are those of separate peoples and we are asked for the moment to suppress our knowledge that it is from just such collective agencies as this that personal identity is most at risk. As, in the usage here, *particularism* claims individual traits for a culture, so elsewhere *people* will transfer to separate peoples the traits of a person. This last transposition occurs in the following sentence: "People have to choose for themselves, each people for itself." Grammatically, the structure is ablative absolute, close to the jimmied-out variety known as a comma-splice: two clauses join in a rush, they mimic the speed of a single thought. In the sentence above, the comma-splice is also a thought splice.

Reading for consistency with the singular subject, we come up with: "People have to choose for themselves, each person for himself." On the other hand, for consistency with the plural: "Peoples have to choose for themselves, each people for itself." But look at what Walzer actually wrote. Person (singular) and people (a culture) are brought into play in the first clause, in the second only people is cashed, yet we are made to feel we have learned something important about *persons* (the synonym for people in the first clause, uncashed but kept in play). My experience as a reader is that turns of phrase like this are too fine in what they accomplish to be a product of conscious planning. When he wrote the sentence, I believe the proper logic for a people was foremost in Walzer's mind. But he did not want to seem to ignore the imperative of personal, of individual, choice, and this gave the misleading cue to the sentence. As it gets worked out, choice is quickly transferred to the culture, its "particularism" being the only

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relevant one. There may be historical situations, as well as grammars, in which the comma cannot be spliced.

Something similar happens in his use of the phrases *a life* and *a way of life*. An (individual) life has its setting in a (communal) way of life. Does it follow that the way of life supplies the particularities any of us would look for in a life? "In fact," writes Walzer, "it is entirely possible to inherit a life and still possess it as one's own." One might, that is to say, make the way of life one's own, give it the coloring of a life one says one has chosen. In a complex being, the process will not be one of mere ratification. Yet to attend to all that occurs in such acts of taking possession is beyond the scope of the cultural interpreter, on Walzer's view. The matter is too intricate. What can reasonably be expected is that the interpreter should evince a proper regard for a given way of life as it is refracted in the medium of a shared commitment. "Neither the same fellowship nor the same idea of respect will be universally shared—and then what demands respect is only indirectly the individual himself; it is more immediately the way of life, the culture of respect and concern, that he shares with his fellows." The individual will be respected to the exact degree that he shows his markings by belonging to a "culture of respect and concern." Contextualized, he is worthy; alone, he evades our instruments—he must consent to pass unremarked. Notice how subtly in this scheme of thought the culturalist outcome is clinched in advance. Every way of life is somebody's way, it did not come from nowhere. Yet so long as the very possibility of "respect and concern" is at stake, any individual would be misguided and possibly heartless to offer a description of a culture in terms not derived from that culture. If such descriptions were given credence, we might not consent to call "a way of life" a life.

Since, argues Walzer, justice itself has been variously invented, being "one more product of human creativity," we ought not to expect "a singular and universal justice" for all. "Why should we value human agency if we are unwilling to give it any room for maneuver and invention?" Room for maneuver and invention here denotes the scope of choice allowed to a particular culture in constituting its *texture*. I draw the last word from aesthetics with Walzer's sanction, for he likens the self-invention of a culture to the creativity of a playwright. A too-liberal structure of laws, such as might impede the culture from exerting creative control in shaping its members, he compares to the censorship that would prevent the playwright from assuming control of his craft. Thus, in the name of liberal values, the believer in liberal justice is obliged, as an act of cultural faith, to let the good particularism of the culture take charge of its members—their way of life, their life, and their lives, which are different names for the same thing.

"When we think of the nation," concludes Walzer, drawing on Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, "we are led to think of boundaries . . . and then we are led to think of other nations: this is a useful intellectual progress." The last phrase is evasive. It is indeed a mark of intellectual refinement to say to someone "You are an X and Xishness is real to me," rather than to say "You are a does-not-compute, sorry." But that form of progress has no implications for what we may choose to do about the X (the person) or Xishness (the culture), once we have admitted either phenomenon to exist. Affectively, it is not clear that the thought of boundaries, a conviction of the otherness of the other side, is any improvement on the despised Kantian model of progress, by which one passes from self-respect to respect for others by saying, "You resemble me in the most important way I can imagine: by being similarly human."

"Nation and Universe" was an anthropology and epistemology of the culturalist idea. In a more recent essay, "The New Tribalism" (*Dissent*, Spring 1992), the bearings are more worldly: what ought to be the liberal response to the struggles for cultural identity and nationhood in Europe and elsewhere today? "I imagine," writes Walzer in opening, "tens of thousands of old men and women whispering to their grandchildren, singing folk songs and lullabies, repeating ancient stories." They have

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come out of the deep freeze, they are here to stay, and he must say what he can on their behalf, for "The left has never understood the tribes." Cultural self-definition will prove to be, thinks Walzer, what totalitarianism was not: an eternal fact of human nature. We had better understand it, if only to coexist with it. "Neutrality is likely to work well only in immigrant societies where everyone has been similarly and in most cases voluntarily transplanted, cut off from homeland and history. In such cases—America is the prime example—tribal feelings are relatively weak." One might choose to treat America as the rare case of normal humanity and not therefore eccentric. Sanity too can be rare. This was the idealism that made Whitman write, in his Preface to *Leaves of Grass*: "America does not repel the past or what it has produced under its forms or amid other politics or the idea of castes or the old religions." He added, regarding all those forms that have earned the name of culture, that America "perceives that the corpse is slowly borne from the eating and sleeping rooms of the house." We ought to treat the cultures with respect, as befits the recognition that they are dead and we are living. We ought to treat them with respect, reply the culturalists, in the knowledge that they give us what life we have.

Yet Walzer concedes that all cultures are artificial. The illusion of a natural unity or origin comes from a founding that is far enough in the past to have been long forgotten. What, then, are we to make of the expedient by which late-coming tribal feelings are evoked in order to foster a strong conviction of *natural* identity? What when the expedient is worked out specifically in relation to government subsidies, educational ideology, the provision of public and forensic space for the cultivation of cultural identities? I am looking ahead in the argument but I should like these questions to be held in mind. For the time being, we are encouraged by Walzer to suppose the confusion will press against natural limits, because "Obviously, there is such a thing as inauthentic tribalism." Obviously? He instances the Katangese secession of 1961.

Speaking as someone who would like to de-authenticate as many ideologies as possible, I see nothing obvious about the process of sorting the authentic from the spurious tribes. Shall duration be the sole criterion? What then of duration that includes an interval of lapsed tribal memory followed by a reassertion from the ground of recovered memory? James Clifford dealt with such a case in "Identity in Mashpee," drawing the moral that, for a *legal* claim of tribal status, the difficulties were apt to be formidable in the eyes of a late, liberal, artificial culture. Shall we judge authenticity then by countable rituals? Or by the number of initiates? with women included? whether or not the tribe itself counts women? Or by the perishability of its systems of belief in the absence of help from a liberal government inspired by culturalist theory? Self-sufficiency might easily be considered evidence of authenticity and hence of worthiness of support. On the other hand, only tribes without self-sufficiency will have the need or the desire for support.

I grind out the paradoxes to show that the claim of authenticity is in this context tautologous to the point of inscrutability. Tribalism being a category of authenticity, what is posited in the defective case seems to be an inauthentic authenticity. Can one be sure about Katanga? Had that inauthentic secession worked out politically, it is a fair surmise its backers would seem in a hundred years as authentic as the Irish in Great Britain or the Slovenes in Yugoslavia. Really, the shortest way back to a grasp of authenticity is by a consistent reversion to natural rather than artificial ideas of community. That must mean continuity of blood (such as could be verified under a slide); or of folk depth (such as could be verified by an archaeologist or ethnomusicologist). The courtroom case for identity in Mashpee was that a tribe in possession again of a custom it had forgotten for generations had as much identity with itself as a person who loses contact with the data of identity while asleep. The trouble with invoking authenticity at all—we shall see by and by how irresistible the

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category has been for the culturalists—is hardly that it fails to contain enough specimens. The applicants are an almost endless array. Many contemporary forms of Satanism are likely to be survivals of the lapsed-identity sort, the most potent of their customs often many centuries old. On the present view, what reason could we cite for barring their adherents from tribal status?

Having in mind the Eurasian republics, Bosnia, and many other current examples, Walzer remarks: "Rather than supporting the existing unions, I would be inclined to support separation whenever separation is demanded by a political movement that, so far as we can tell, represents the popular will." The statement is less sweeping than it sounds when you consider how much hangs on "so far as we can tell" and "represents the popular will." Still, why not put it the other way: "Rather than support separation, I would be inclined to support the existing unions except when. . . ."? A disposition to favor the separatist claims in practice seems to be an irresistible effect of having granted in theory a superior reality to "particularism." We ought to try to find some good in the separations, if possible; good wherever it convincingly represents the popular will, so far as we can tell. "Let the people go who want to go," Walzer continues. "Many of them won't go all that far." I confess I cannot share the mood of this sentence. Geographically, scarcities of transportation will contract the space in which an exclusionist pilgrimage is executed. Considered any other way, "Many of them won't go all that far" is an astonishing euphemism. In length of atrocious cultural self-invention the peoples of Bosnia have gone very far while going nowhere.

"If," Walzer affirms, "there turn out to be political or economic disadvantages in their departure, they will find a way to reestablish connections." That would seem to depend on how many links have been severed: how many were the assassinations? how frequent the random killings of civilians? how brutal the tortures, the rapes, the religious racial propaganda strewing the path of the defeated? In the light of facts like these, "They won't go all that far" is an apothegm almost parental, and generalized from the experience of a parent in a lucky family. It makes a poor comfort to the recalcitrant member of the departing tribe, who may have felt driven to go because claimed by her kind, and claimed in a setting where the ugliness of that appropriation was one degree less intolerable than the certain death promised by the culture-hardened members of the rival tribe. Now, what, if any, are the duties of a liberal toward this particular person, whom we are urged to surrender to the vivid particularism of the culture?

The reservation that my question implies has been anticipated in a reserve clause of "The New Tribalism": "I don't mean to underestimate the nastiness of tribal zealots. But weren't the zealots of the religious wars equally nasty?" For nasty, read murderous—but what should follow from this knowledge? The only lesson drawn appears to be that we have an obligation not to interfere with the popular force of a nation coming late to its sovereign cultural identity; on no account may we make it the beneficiary of the lesson we learned from religious wars: that the thing to do with a cultural identity is to keep it to yourself. On what ground do we refrain from speaking to the tribes with *this* understanding? To judge by the tenor of these articles, Walzer is fairly sure that religious wars are a thing of the past. I think they could well erupt again. Two highly favorable points about religious wars may as well be admitted. They give a meaning to life, and they are fun. Historical experience suggests that one can, with hard suasive work, shame people out of the brutal pleasure of the violence, since most people have other pleasures. The best shaming device is the suggestion that cultural identity is nothing to be puffed up about: that there are persons, whose approval is to be desired, who respect people less for their self-image than for other traits. My inclination to put the matter this way must mean I share the Enlightenment prejudice against religion rather more than Walzer does. I share the Enlightenment belief in progress rather less. Anyway, the version of progress he invokes, which manages to encompass progress both toward universality and toward tribal

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intensities of feeling, is out of my imaginative reach.

What can it mean for liberals, holding the beliefs we hold about politics, to say without a contest: "Let the people go who want to go." Individual interests, even our enlightened interests, may be more exacting than this. Walzer believes, in a formulation I paraphrased earlier, that "the commitment of individuals and groups to their own history, culture, and identity . . . is a permanent feature of human social life," but in assessing the tribes his emphasis falls on the history, culture, and identity of groups. It is different when we come to the "divided selves" of the members of the liberal commercial democratic societies. As a citizen of such a society, Walzer says, "I will acquire a more complex identity than the idea of tribalism suggests. I will identify myself with more than one tribe; I will be an American, a Jew, an Easterner, an intellectual, a professor." Only one of these names denotes what most people would call a tribe; the difference here has not been split with very much care. But what must strike anyone reading this characterization of the mobile, multi-essential, divided life of the liberal tribalist is how consciously impoverished it is. Suppose one described the same citizen as a man of subtle scholarly temperament, with a driving affection toward friends and family and an active benevolence toward many others, animated by a strong impulse of gentleness in all his recorded dealings; a wholly anti-theatrical character with a tacit but deep antipathy to dramatic displays, whose appetite to be a spectator at any catastrophe is an absolute zero, and whose imagination of disaster may in consequence be cooler than is sometimes useful in predicting the dark developments of a bad time. It makes, at least, a different and a possible description of the author of the argument we have surveyed. It is novelistic rather than abstract and socialized. It aims at the individual rather than the race, and it tries to picture a temperament.

That cultural identity is "a permanent feature of human life" is trivially true. We all come from somewhere. *Naturam furca expelles, tamen usque recurret*: "Though you drive out nature with a pitchfork yet it will come back all the way." It is with culture as with nature: the word, if it means anything, suggests a second nature grafted upon the first until the two become indistinguishable. But why must each of us be more than matter-of-fact in committing our lives to our history, our culture, our identity? They—culture, history, identity—have done many things for us and many things to us. What makes us affect gratitude instead of anger in return? A culture may be like a family. Are we therefore to presume it is a happy family? We owe nothing to any object or condition as a mere forced consequence of its permanence. Many permanent features of human life are bad and partly eradicable: envy comes to mind. Some of the features are worth trying to discourage. William Blake would not have agreed that cultural identity is a necessary feature of human life, though he believed that art was and that contest was. How much, Blake asked, that we care for, how much that we habitually associate with culture, does not come from art, from contest, and from the personal imagination that culturalists ask us to connect essentially with culture?

> Every time less than a pulsation of the artery
> Is equal in its period and value to six thousand years,
> For in this period the poet's work is done.

To the culture, there is no substitute for six thousand years. Yet Blake declares that the artist is any man or woman, that his or her particulars are sufficient materials for reflection: nothing is faster than thought and nothing weighs more. Does he set the human standard unrealistically high? Do we want to set it realistically low? We had better admit from the first that we are touched by individuals, and by the idea of their lives, and that by association with these alone do we ever come close to imagining a race or its way of life. Those who would like to be moved by the latter are brutal sentimentalists; their effort to be moved is an emotional exertion with a practical correlative. They are preparing themselves by delusive affection for the empty charity of war.

Charles Taylor has long been struck (as he

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remarks in an introduction to his *Philosophical Papers*) by "the way in which an individual is constituted by the language and culture which can only be maintained and renewed in the communities he is part of." For Taylor, the highest ideal of life is "self-realization"—an ideal that heavily marked the entire strain of German romanticism that descends from Herder. Self-realization presumes a "negative" freedom from constraint. But it goes further into what Taylor in an essay of 1979, "What's Wrong with Negative Liberty," called "some of the most inspiring terrain of liberalism." To realize oneself is to pass from false into true consciousness. We may each make the passage distinctly, yet, for all of us, self-realization is a discovery of the meaning of life. The quest for self-realization or self-fulfillment, as Taylor also calls it, is not undertaken by the individual alone. He is given a language by a culture, and his success is contingent on his work in the medium of that language. Self-fulfillment thus belongs, as a local product, to a larger and endless process for which culture supplies the tools. Individual and culture are alike expressive. In works of art we can say the individual has his flowering; in the long past of culture and custom he has his soil. A main duty of the state is to see that the course of cultivation is allowed to go on unimpeded.

What is initially puzzling about this view is that it should want to call itself liberal. Very likely, its liberality is assured by the fact that culture itself is progressive. Taylor appears to have read Lionel Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity* as a narrative of progress—a curious and original misreading—and to have felt the propriety of extending an idea of authenticity to apply to culture as well as its constituent persons. All that remained was to find a method by which the routines of authentication could be decently bureaucratized. This method Taylor has lately supplied with a proposal that liberal societies invent a new legal right, the right to cultural "recognition." The proposal is sketched in his essay "The Politics of Recognition" (in *Multiculturalism and the Politics of Recognition*, 1992), a secondary purpose of which may be to suggest what the tribes will look like once their struggles for power are reduced from wars for authority to contests for representation. But I had better warn in advance that I find the idea of "recognition" elusive. Its translation from idealist psychology to republican politics is an uneasy affair, in ways the translator has not always taken into account. More palpably here than in Walzer, we are confronted with an idea of political fulfillment that is borrowed from aesthetics. There is a revealing moment in Taylor's essay on negative liberty when he observes that freedom without a positive idea of self-realization is "philistine."

Recognition is the gesture or ritual, on which Taylor would like to confer legal force, by which a state says to a culture or a culture says to another culture: "I admit you have a being (an identity, a collective self) capable and worthy of realization." A piece of extracurricular knowledge may be useful here. Taylor has been a major public participant in discussions of the separation of Quebec, and he is a declared optimist regarding the probable consequences of separation. His essay is in some ways a Canadian sermon to Americans. The cultural negotiations already under way are brought forward as a strenuous but not discouraging example of what the future holds for the North Atlantic commercial democracies generally. On the whole, this prototype compares favorably with such alternatives as Bosnia and Ireland. Knowing his audience well, Taylor, by the mere evocation of national tranquility, is able to sidestep the challenge of liberal secularism to *all* bargains with cultural identity.

He agrees with Walzer in one large prescriptive assumption. We must by no means look skeptically on the claims of a culture—a race, a religion, a tribe, or a not yet recognized nation. Rather, the culture and its claims are legitimate until proved otherwise. But Taylor is willing to specify, more tender-mindedly than Walzer, the harm that may ensue upon "misrecognition"—an idea I confess to finding unintelligible, which Taylor associates with evils he thinks distinguishable from physical abuse, economic exploitation, and social subordination (for all of which the liberal state has sanctions already in store). "Real damage, real

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distortion," says Taylor, can come from misrecognition. What, one might ask, is real recognition? Must it be justified by testimony from solid sources to prove its connection with our old friend authenticity? Can there be wrong but well-meaning recognitions that do less than real damage? These matters are left unaccounted for but they are *a posteriori* in any case, for it is plain to people of moral intelligence that "the withholding of recognition can be a form of oppression." The premise Taylor requires for this axiom is that human beings are dialogically constituted. We may believe in the dialogue of the mind with itself, or other forms of inward colloquy, but these emerged from an internalization of a public process: they are the forming and reforming of a self-image that was always already social.

My identity is defined, observes Taylor, "as an individual, and also as a culture," but the form of the statement is misleading. In his argument, priority is ascribed again and again to the culture. Personal dignity is mediated by cultural recognition. I learn to value who I am by coming to know that others value the sort of person I am—"sort" being determined not novelistically but from the available social science categories. Race, religion, and native language take precedence over profession, region, and political affiliation. This is a new sort of assumption for a liberal theorist to make. It is not yet firmly entrenched, but Taylor writes as if it almost were and invites consideration of the question: what would it be like if many liberals came to think like this? When I look into the meaning of the assumption, I am first troubled, then baffled. But Taylor himself soon aborts the inquiry. Instead of the construction of a person by a culture, the topic becomes "the importance of cultural survival." The last word unpredictably changes the tenor of the discussion.

Adequate representation for a culture may have seemed an extension of democratic rights. But, with cultural *extinction* on the line, a plea for cultural entitlement acquires much of the urgency of an appeal for human rights as such. We feel one way about people interested in recognition as a group—another way about a group of people on the point of dying out as a group. What will become of these people? we ask, and we sympathize. As in the shifts of grammar in Walzer, a collective entitlement is asserted by soliciting attention to the fate of persons (their commitments, their sufferings). Then the appeal is transferred to "the people" to whom the persons belong. In this transposition, Taylor actually goes a step further than Walzer. People, he says, bent on the difficult project of cultural survival will want to explore a "politics of difference" based on "judgments about what makes a good life—judgments in which the integrity of cultures has an important place." To ascribe to a culture the virtue of integrity is an exorbitant choice for a left-wing theorist. (For a fascist, such a move would be commonplace: ascription of integrity to a culture is what is needed to get a fascist politics off the ground.) Suppose then that an individual culture requires integrity. What are the consequences for the individual person of the culture's requirement of integrity? He or she had certainly better not be divided.

In reading "The Politics of Recognition," one may feel some doubt whether the author is narrating a development of which he heartily approves or one he would prefer to qualify, reform, argue with, or in some measure retard. In the following passage, the appearance of detachment goes over almost into satire:

> What is new . . . is that the demand for recognition is now explicit. And it has been made explicit in the way I indicated above, by the spread of the idea that we are formed by recognition. We could say that, thanks to this idea, misrecognition has now graduated to the rank of a harm that can be hardheadedly enumerated along with the ones mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The previous paragraph had mentioned "inequality, exploitation, and injustice" and I find it impossible to grasp "cultural misrecognition" except as a description inclusive of such harms as the above, to which they alone give pragmatic meaning. Consider misrecognition of a personal kind: it might be expressed in acts of ostracism, which would be a form of injustice. If there were no such result, what

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could qualify as evidence that the misrecognition had even taken place? The strangest word in the passage is "hardheadedly." Are we to understand the misrecognized as hardheaded, in the sense of calculating, when they deliver their complaint? Or are the sympathizers hardheaded, in the sense of cynical, when they decide the complaint must be met and the bargainers recognized?

When Taylor comes to describe the goods of an identity-culture, he is not far from describing goods already associated with the life of a liberal society.

> Merely on the human level, one could argue that it is reasonable to suppose that cultures that have provided the horizon of meaning for large numbers of human beings, of diverse characters and temperaments, over a long period of time—that have, in other words, articulated their sense of the good, the holy, the admirable—are almost certain to have something that deserves our admiration and respect.

The few qualities here that do not belong to the usual ascriptive traits of "democratic character" are such as might be fostered by any society that functions *as* a society. In short, the mesh is at once too fine and too wide. Nazi Germany, the extreme case of an integral culture, did have a well-articulated sense of "the good, the holy, the admirable." This is an example the liberal theorists of culturalism want very much not to see brought into view, but the Nazis were great pioneers of identity culture; without the actions at Telemark and a few other turns of fortune, their culture might have been strong enough to win the last world war; and in that case their conquering way of life would have come to be called life. If it went on to survive a hundred years or more, any culturalist would be compelled to admit it was indeed a culture with a horizon of meaning.

Within a picked corps of rulers, given a freedom comparable to what the SS enjoyed during the war, one can imagine a certain diversity of character persisting in this culture—within limits of course, but ours too has its limits. There seems no sure way of discriminating the integrity of a total politics from the integrity of a self-sustaining culture. If it be answered "But theirs was not authentic," one can note the weirdness of adopting a Nazi criterion of worth in an attempt to invalidate Nazi culture. The way out is to renounce tribal concern and respect as an act of idolatry that wants to extract an ethical good from religious and aesthetic phenomena. And yet, to make that admission is to break again into the language of nonculturalist liberalism: a language in which we refuse to say that culture is the definitively naturalizing fact of life, or that it represents a humanization of the social artifice in a way that mere politics fails to accomplish.

Joseph Raz's essay "Multiculturalism: A Liberal Perspective" (*Dissent*, Winter 1994) aims to pass from Walzer's "understanding" and Taylor's "recognition" to an idea of *multicultural toleration* as a natural right of citizens in a liberal democracy. His argument deploys a nomenclature in which the classical liberal ideal of tolerance appears as tacitly discriminatory, and the actively anti-discriminatory ideology of modern liberalism appears as good-natured but still not sufficiently robust. By contrast, Raz invokes "multicultural liberalism" to describe the outlook he recommends. I pause to say one word for toleration—the best thing any society can offer and as much as any of us should want from a society. The word in its Lockean usage had none of the grudging tone that Raz imputes to it, and it is a word we should care enough for not to move to the pejorative column. I am not convinced that Raz's first two kinds of liberalism are historically or ideologically distinct. In any case, it is the third form of liberalism he wants to argue for, a liberalism of "affirmation."

The people who do the affirming are, once again, groups. They do a fair job of it in any nonrepressive society, and their affirmations come at the expense of many other things. What could it mean for a liberal society to add its affirmation of the cultures to their affirmation of themselves? Raz's grave enthusiasm may seem obtuse, but in another sense his is a necessary, and a doggedly honest, effort to call

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the theoretical bluff of the culturalists. Where Walzer's construal of the priority of culture was anthropological common sense, and Taylor's a late version of German romantic organicism and expressivism, Raz evidently draws his conception from a reading of Wittgenstein on games. Our "core options" in life, he asserts, have the structure of a game like chess. The metaphors that Walzer and Taylor borrowed from art Raz borrows instead from the domain of craft or skill. The options turn out to include—in a generic and unspecifying list—"cultural, sporting, and other interests we develop." There is an awkward circularity in listing "cultural interests" under the options provided by an entity called a culture. I believe Raz had here in mind an older, and not an anthropological, usage, according to which cultural artifacts are judged by a mind not wholly submerged in the medium of a religious, racial, or national culture. In the light of the new uses we have looked at, this piece of phrasing points to the survival of an earlier, pre-culturalist, layer of his thinking.

Raz tries hard to purge his argument of such vestiges. "This commonality of interlocking practices," he continues, "making up the range of life options open to anyone socialized into them is what cultures are." Notice how the multiculturalist outcome is contained in the culturalist premise. If to be socialized at all is to be drawn into the web of beliefs, customs, and practices that define a culture, then to be initiated into a society where diversity is supposed a good thing is already to have embraced the multicultural condition. So we are offered not persuasion but description: a Wittgensteinian layering of verbal effects, with plenty of words suggestive of denseness, texture, and nuance to bring out the impalpable weave of the medium Raz is describing. He has to assign to society itself—which, in effect, he chooses to rename a multiculture—the individual traits ordinarily linked with personal character. We have seen this operation twice before; but let the difference of idiom speak for itself: "Only through being socialized in a culture"—substitute "culturalized in a society" and the meaning is the same—"can one tap the options that give life a meaning."

Suppose I state now an opposite thesis. *Nothing* gives life a meaning—nothing except the socially illegible and arbitrary energy of a person. He, or she, does not know the meaning of that energy. With luck, one may hope fate and fortune conspire to keep a mind and a body on the move, and one may hope that, with the unselfish instincts allowed to run the same race as the selfish ones, a decent and useful life will emerge. I make this as non-robust as I can, and it is not yet finished because no first-person wants it to be: the story of oneself is made by second and third persons (including oneself in some future, where one might as well be a second or third person). The "options" on this view do not precede the person. To suppose that they can is a version of the bad faith of supposing the essence of a person can precede the existence.

"I am what I am," writes Raz, "but equally I am what I can become or could have been. To understand a person we need to know how that person came to be what he or she is, that is, to understand what she might have been and why she is some of those things and not others. In this way culture constitutes identity." With the first sentence I have no quarrel. The move in the next, to the imperative of "understanding," will be baffling to anyone who has not read a fair amount of the culturalist literature (recall Walzer: "The left has never *understood* the tribes."). What kind of knowledge is this meant to evoke?—that given by a science, or sympathy, or any sort of persuasive narrative? No final understanding is attainable of what I am: this axiom of Mill's may even have been shared by Wittgenstein. Science will not do it, poetry will not do it, psychoanalysis may produce the desired assent but that, too, constitutes no more than a provisional understanding, and what none of these things can perform no ideology or system of life is likely to achieve. And yet Raz in his last sentence seems to affirm that culture can do it. For culture *constitutes* identity. It explains the encounter of our lives with our options; it

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contains in itself the understanding of what we did and did not become. The conclusion is plausible only if the self of the first sentence was defined, as it did not then admit itself to be, in wholly cultural terms.

We are now in a position to appreciate the vexing involutions of an effort to match the politics of cultural identity with the maxims of prudence in a pluralist democracy. Raz sees no special difficulty here because he thinks exclusionist cultural self-images are much the same thing as divergent vocational temperaments. "Philosophers do not make good generals, and generals do not make good philosophers." Ku Kluxers do not make good Lubavitchers, Lubavitchers do not make good Ku Kluxers, but the compatibility of their values can be understood on the analogy of a society that incorporates generals and philosophers. The plurality of cultures is just a plurality of callings. As a matter of experience, I think the argument is wrong. Competing cultures do not claim simply "the virtues of the competing ways of life" where we can read "ways of life" as a synonym for skills, routines, acquired itineraries. Cultures, as Raz noticed in another connection, come to us frankly professing to give a meaning to life. However, still tracking the flexible continuous analogy of games/skills/ways-of-life/cultures-of-doing-things, Raz declares that "liberal multiculturalism" is not "opposed to the assimilation of one cultural group by others." It would seem the cultures themselves can be trusted to guard against that; but the acceptance of assimilation is quite at odds with Taylor's worry about "survival": if the cultures are assimilated by a liberal society, they will surely suffer extinction, however involuntary; and thereby suffer also a loss of integrity to each member. The truth is that faithful culturalism must be opposed to assimilation in practice if not in principle. To the extent that Raz fails to affirm the anti-assimilationist scruple, his politics stand exposed as nothing but pluralist liberalism cured of its prejudices.

The fact that many cultures a new-modeled liberal theorist may have to endorse are themselves illiberal was discussed in passing by Walzer and hardly at all by Taylor. Raz is the most troubled of these writers when he looks at this prospect. His solution is to build liberal protections into the cultures that bear the illiberal threat: "Multiculturalism urges respect for cultures that are not themselves liberal cultures. . . . But it does so while imposing liberal protections for individual freedom on those cultures." The suggestion is preposterous. On this plan liberalism is required to integrate, into the self-understandings of other cultures, the political freedoms that make liberal ideology what it is; the hypothesis being that the cultures will allow it and that, having seen the good of the principles, they will yet prefer to remain on the whole illiberal. Of course, if one ever sought to enforce such a plan its effect would be either to crush the orthodox heart of the cultures or to repel every effort to assert the liberal right of exit. A century of Little Rocks, made infinitely repeatable by a government that intones the legitimacy of a century of Orval Faubuses: the education budget and the military budget required to pay for such an operation would work nicely in concert for each other's increase, while negating each other's effects.

So equivocal an experiment of thought will only occur to a mind whose ideas of cultural membership are at once benign and detached. In the work of the liberal culturalists, all the efforts of unparochial recognition prove their thinking to have been, as it were, preliberalized. "Some people," observes Raz, "fear, consciously or unconsciously, that if our culture is not superior to others, we are not entitled to love it as much as we do." This embarrassment, or "fear," must be the other side of the unintimidated confidence Raz supposes one might cherish instead. Can we then imagine someone saying, "Even though my culture is inferior to others, I love it unshakably"? Or, "Granted my culture seems impoverished beside the neighboring culture I am coming to know, still I prefer to be forever attached to mine"? Inferior and superior are not ascriptions that people commonly make of cultures; they would be unlikely to do so even if stupefied by theorists into thinking of

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themselves only in the context of culture. But let anyone imagine what it would be like to engage in the comparison suggested by Raz. Is this a state of mind that has ever been attained?

We are to imagine someone considering, with love, his culture and considering at the same time that it is not the only culture thinkable from inside—this thought itself being entertained from inside, since thought, like all the other options, is cultural. I am to reflect my culture as member and reflect on it as nonmember and to conclude that from my point of view it is permissible though perhaps false to love it unquestioningly. (Raz compares the unconditional character of this attachment to the love we feel for our children. Enlightenment theorists of culture like Burke tended to compare it instead to the love we feel for a grandparent. The shift is one more symptom of the *tenderness* culture now admits among the debts that are properly owed to it once personified.) To repeat: I do not believe that the imputed state of mind has occurred or that it can occur, in the nature of culture and in the nature of the way people use culture. The thoughts, "This culture is deeply mine," and "This culture is perhaps inferior," simply do not coexist in a single mind. The person who thinks "My culture is perhaps inferior" is halfway to thinking his way into a different culture and dangerously close to the thought that "No culture is worthy of my love in the way that humanity, and particular human beings, are."

Anyway, the fear of inferiority is an other-people's-fear. I doubt that Raz has felt it. As the paternal tone of his argument makes plain, he has not lately cherished, or does not now remember, any thoroughly attached experience of an identity-culture. Culture is necessary for the others. It is all they have. We, the argument seems to say, know better, or rather some part of us knows. But for the others—even "oppressive" cultures deserve *our* support for *their* sake because "They provide many of their members with all that they can have." All they can have of what? Of goods. And as we know, all goods are at bottom cultural goods. But in the name of what principle, conviction, or value of our own do we wish upon others the good of the oppressive culture which is all they can have? One thing we can be sure of. In sympathizing with an oppressive culture, and forging a bond to prove the substance of our sympathy, we condemn to deeper oppression by that culture the very rebels against it whom liberal principles adjure us to admire.

Raz concludes his essay with some practical liberal multiculturalist proposals. (1) The young of all cultures "should be educated, if their parents so desire, in the culture of their own groups." Liberalism already tells us that the parents should not be forbidden from such a venture. The practical force of Raz's statement must therefore be that such education ought to be paid for by the state. (2) Customs and practices of the culture should be "recognized [a transparent homage to Taylor's elusive word] in law by all public bodies in society." But the old objection returns: how does the state sort out the true from the false claimants to cultural status? (3) Cultures that are undereducated should be adequately educated, says Raz. This worry can only apply to cultures with a low rate of literacy, as that is defined by a liberal society. Here the question arises: should cultures suffering that privation be educated in their own way of thinking, or in a way designated by the society? The first option is the more culturalist. The second is apt to create more prosperous livelihoods for members of a deprived culture, and thereby, in a possibly relevant aggregate sense, to improve and even enrich the life of the culture. But the second policy in no way differs from the enlightened egalitarianism of a nondiscriminatory liberal state. (4) Public support must be found for "autonomous cultural institutions" such as museums, charities, and so on, favoring the larger groups "with a more committed membership." The final point is made glancingly. In my observation it has been the small groups that have the most committed memberships. Perhaps, in Bentham's manner, we could arrive at a quotient incorporating at once the intensity and the popularity of the commitment. (5) What is done for artistic and community activities should extend to "public space (as well as air space on television)." Let me suggest a difficulty of putting into practice any of these proposals.

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A liberal society has a commitment not to infringe the rights of unaffiliated talent. A thinker may choose, as Spinoza once did, or an artist may choose, as Naipaul and Rushdie have, to cease to belong as reclaimable property to the culture that "constitutes" them. They are doing something that Walzer, Taylor, and Raz agree is epistemologically impossible. Nevertheless, they are doing it. And liberal theorists in the past affirmed a commitment to respect the claims of such persons against the culture they were making less sure of its integrity. I do not finally see how to assess the culturalist argument except as a weakening of this commitment in favor of other affirmations. The reply of the Enlightenment liberal must be that the case for the shift of principle has not been made. Its plausibility has come from throwing around the idea of culture a sympathetic haze that owes its charm to a reminiscence of the atmosphere of a person. Every pragmatic suggestion of culturalism betrays itself in a forcing together of two, mutually repellent, hypotheses: that the tribal cultures will abate not a jot of their property in each member whom they own; and that they are sufficiently flexible proprietors to allow us a spotless conscience as we commit to their care individuals of the many nations and nations-within-nations tending now toward dissolution.

I began by saying that liberal culturalism was a lie, a gesture of shrugging off irony adopted late by persons who think habitually as ironists. I have to recur to the same note more somberly. The theorists of cultural identity are hatching dragons. The nest belongs to a kind of creature they have never imagined, but there they sit and brood, with care and concern, thinking what comes will possibly look a good deal like themselves. The fire may scorch us in the years to come. By the self-evasion and the pandering of our belief in culture as the maker of identity, we rob the cultures with whom we profess to sympathize of the very clue that has made liberal democracy the distinct entity we are growing every day uneasily convinced it is. If the manners of a liberal society are not inherited by successive generations in the prospering democracies, if their incompatibility with certain other options is not understood, talk will be at an end regarding the right of exit we fondly hope to attach to the illiberal societies in return for our recognition of their right to be just what they are. At some point the irony must be reengaged. The right of exit unconditionally recognized by every truly vital culture is the right to become a nonperson, the right to permanent exile, the right to be killed by a flourishing community of unimpeded members. Liberal culture, if we can call it a culture, is the only one that has ever disclaimed property in the persons of its members. Maybe that is another way of saying it is not a culture after all. And so much the better for liberalism. □

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Responses

Charles Taylor

A diaphanous screen seems to separate "liberals" from opponents, who are often grouped together (by "liberals") in clumps called "communitarians," or here "culturalists." One of the things that doesn't seem to get through the screen is the sense attributed to the crucial words.

I put the key terms above in quotation marks as a way of saying that they have no agreed sense, not even quite the same logic, in the writings of Bromwich (he is far from alone among American "liberals") and, say, my own. He really gets me quite wrong at times, but this is not surprising, like someone trying to puzzle out a German text with a Dutch dictionary.

Start with "liberal." Bromwich talks as though it were quite clear what this means, and as if it meant quite clearly one thing. This has become common among American theorists, and involves a double identification: of liberalism with historical American practice, and of this practice with a certain philosophical justification of it. If one permits oneself to be a little less parochial both geographically and historically, one can discern a number of liberalisms. Just philosophically, think of the distance between Kant and Tocqueville. For the latter, there are questions on the agenda of a free society that don't even rise above the horizon for the former, questions concerning the "political culture" of a free society, for instance. Questions that can't be answered by reiterating the lexical priority of individual rights over collective identity. Think also of the different historical and social situations of Finland, France, Canada, the United States, Argentina.

Then "culturalist": this is supposed to be some general position "endorsing" cultures in general, or endowing them "with a dignity and . . . respect comparable [to those] I would claim for myself." This in turn seems to mean that the "culturalist" gives priority to the demands of group culture over those of the individual. I must say that I find it hard to understand how anyone could espouse such a position who wasn't almost totally dissociated from the realities of human life. Does it mean that one endorses all cultures, always gives them priority? Why would anyone want to do such a thing? A blanket priority here seems as unreal as one running the other way: always foster individual independence over the integrity of a historical culture. It seems to me that you have to be operating in a dissociated world of self-enclosed theory even to formulate such propositions, let alone earnestly debate which one we should adopt.

Let's say there's an aboriginal community, in some process of assimilation to mainstream North American culture, with a gamut of possible landing points at the end of the process, involving different adaptations of mainstream and tradition to each other, some obviously more positive than others, where "positive" is judged by a broad spectrum of understandable goods, including high on the list such goods as individual autonomy, creativity, and the like (liberal goods, these). Suppose that you judge that the process has more chances of going forward to a good end, and

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with less risk of human disaster, if certain powers are devolved onto the group. The case, in short, for aboriginal self-government. Culture or community is figuring in your equation, and I would maintain must figure in a liberal-democratic equation. The fact that you're empowering a group identified by culture and history shouldn't deter you, on the grounds that as a "liberal" you have to avoid "culturalism" at any cost.

In short, the terms Bromwich proposes seem to me close to useless for discussing any real life issue. The contrary appearance only arises if you assume: (a) that our moral and political dilemmas can be resolved by adopting high-level principles, attributing priority to different considerations, which we then follow through come hell or high water; and (b) that the social-historical world comes simply packaged, so that a phenomenon like "cultural solidarity" reappears identically everywhere from the aboriginal reserve to the U.S. campus to Bosnia. The possibility that something quite different in crucial respects might be going on in ex-Yugoslavia is not even mooted, let alone explored. It is assumed that we already have the vocabulary to discuss these issues, and we just need to get on with it.

This assumption seems to me very wide of the mark. I am not claiming that I have this vocabulary and Bromwich doesn't. I think we are all struggling toward it, trying to do justice to the real diversity of things, and puzzling how to make real on the ground our liberal-democratic commitments. I think that the difference between Bromwich and myself is that he writes as though this weren't so.

For instance, like anyone who has used the term, I realize that we are still struggling to know what we mean by "culture." I know it has something to do with what has defined the important, the holy, the worthwhile for many people over time. In this sense, there is no Nazi culture (evoked in the predictable fashion). Nazism is an ideology, a move within (and partly against) European culture. Where exactly do you draw the line? I wish I had a clear answer. I am not alone in lacking one. But part of what people mean by culture in this quasi-anthropological sense is precisely that it is **horizonal**, that it provides the background, the basic vocabulary from which people make the moves they do, build the particular forms that they do. Bromwich seems aware of this, because he cites this horizonal, enabling character as what motivates "culturalists" to make much of it. Nazism was a bricolage, which put together elements of the sub-Nietzschean counterculture, along with *völkisch*, racist, anti-Semitic, and anticapitalist strands, among others.

My point is not to rebut any arguments here, just to underline how we need concepts a little more refined than the portmanteau hold-alls proposed by Bromwich if we are to make any headway. Otherwise, we remain stuck in familiar grooves, running from one darkened station to another, rather like the intellectual dinosaurs who debate whether human beings are formed by heredity or environment, nature or nurture.

I have to add, in fairness, that there were places where Bromwich got me wrong that have not necessarily to do with the cross-purposes between us. When I spoke about misrecognition coming to be classed as a harm, I was basically reporting, not endorsing. Raising the issue whether I agree, it seems to me evident that in some cases it can approach harmfulness, in others the claim is specious, part of the rhetorical hyperbole of the present debates. I just didn't have space to go into all this.

One last burst of polemic. Bromwich describes my essay on "The Politics of Recognition" as "a Canadian sermon to Americans." I hadn't thought of it that way. But if I have something to preach to (some) Americans, it is not: be like us Canadians (the absurdity of this is evident on the face of it, although unfortunately the equal absurdity of the reverse proposition is not as clear to everyone). Rather, my message is to American "liberals," and it would read: please take the outside world a little more seriously, and note the variety of political and cultural situations and forms even among liberal democracies. You might learn something interesting.

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Michael Walzer

David Bromwich writes powerfully and at length about the sins of "culturalism," and my response here can only be brief and incomplete. But these are issues that we will continue to argue about in *Dissent*; I will look for occasions to deal in greater depth with Bromwich's critique. Here I want only to sketch my own critique of his positive argument about the individualist alternative to culture.

"*Nothing* gives life meaning," he writes in what I take to be the key sentence of his essay, ". . . except the socially illegible and arbitrary energy of a person." And then, one sentence further on, "one may hope that, with the unselfish instincts allowed to run the same race as the selfish ones, a decent and useful life will emerge." But, of course, it isn't a question of instincts in a competitive race. What makes for decency in human beings (I will come back to usefulness later) is a long and tangled socialization process, with all its inevitably cultural components: familial authority, schooling, moral codes, peer groups, virtues exemplified and taught, historical models, formal and informal systems of reward and punishment. Sometimes this process fails entirely, sometimes it is only partially successful, sometimes it is badly designed or substantively flawed—and then we see most clearly what the arbitrary energy of individual men and women can come to.

Bromwich is quick to notice the repressiveness and brutality of (some) groups; in fact, he tends to reify groupness, to present us with an essentialist group, always repressive and brutal. But he provides no account of indecent individuals—the murderous narcissists who appear so often in political life, the take-no-prisoner egotists of the marketplace, the petty tyrants who wreak havoc in families, and so on. Arrogance, cruelty, resentment, selfishness: these are individual traits. They seem to appear in every human culture, and Bromwich is probably right to suggest (if this is what he means to suggest) that we have to confront them directly, without worrying overmuch about the cultural idiom in which they are expressed. When we think about decency and indecency, our recognition of "denseness, texture, and nuance" is likely to give way to more universal judgments.

But when we think about lives that are useful to our fellows, then it does matter how this particular group of men and women, the local fellowship, understands usefulness. What are the goods that it values and pursues? What are the callings, professions, careers, activities that it recommends and honors? Mandarin intellectuals, Hindu ascetics, rabbinic scholars, Athenian orators, Roman senators, itinerant Christian preachers, feudal knights, modern scientists, engineers, doctors—the list is long, but the point already obvious: within all these groups useful lives have "emerged." But the lives are different; the differences are culturally determined; and they are not trivial. Moreover, "options" of this sort certainly do precede the individuals who enact them, even though the enactments also differ among themselves, and we can recognize conformist and maverick mandarins, ascetics, rabbis, preachers, and so on.

Similarly, I think, Bromwich's autonomous, self-creating individual is a cultural ideal (our own), which precedes the men and women who try to plan their lives in accordance with its stipulations; and there are conformist and maverick versions of autonomy. What Harold Rosenberg once called "the herd of independent minds" makes frequent appearances in modern liberal societies. Only occasionally does one of the independent minds break free.

But it follows from the openness and toleration espoused by modern liberalism that there are alternative herds. And here too men and women break free. This doesn't necessarily mean that they become Bromwichian individuals, though that is one "option" in a society like ours, and perhaps even the favored one. It also means that they give distinctive form to

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the ideas of usefulness or goodness held by their fellows. Bromwich seems to deny this possibility: preliberal or illiberal (religious or ethnic) cultures make total claims on their members and so rule out truly individual distinctiveness. Well, some do and some don't; the range of disagreement and the opportunities for originality vary across cultures in ways he doesn't, perhaps can't, acknowledge.

It is even more characteristic of a liberal society that people run with more than one herd. This, too, isn't entirely new. Think of the philosopher Philo in ancient Alexandria, a pious Jew who ran with the neo-platonists; or the Christian Aristotelians of medieval Europe; or eighteenth-century French aristocrats who were also enlightened *philosophes*. Hyphenated Americans, struggling to figure out how to be one thing and another at the same time, stand in a long tradition.

How can it be destructive of liberalism to value these twin possibilities of social difference and self-division? I would rather say that the great achievement of liberal societies is to have democratized both, to have made it possible for ordinary people to live freely within more than one cultural community. Liberalism has a dual character: it is a particular culture and also an inclusive framework for (other) particular cultures. It protects its own competition—by tolerating, say, religious faith and practice. Bromwich is in favor of this kind of protection; he only wants us to dislike intensely much of what gets protected. He is, to paraphrase his comment on Raz, a pluralist with prejudices.

Some of the protected groups are, no doubt, illiberal; similarly, the "arbitrary energy" of some of Bromwich's individuals is socially destructive. That only means that we have to look for political arrangements that constrain groups and individuals. It may be helpful here to think of the constraints on groups as classically liberal in character (Raz provides a good account of them). The constraints on individuals, in our culture, derive most importantly from the socialist critique of liberalism. None of the necessary constraints are endangered, all of them can in fact be supported, by writers like Taylor, Raz, and myself, who enjoy and want to preserve cultural difference. □

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In Memoriam

Rose Laub Coser 1916–1994

Rose Laub Coser died August 21, 1994 at her summer home in Wellfleet, Massachusetts, ending seventy-eight years of intense and passionate commitment to her family, the institutions of which she was a part, sociological analysis, and the cause of social justice. Facing down the challenges of severe health problems over the last few years, culminating in kidney failure, Rose Coser was at work when she died on a new book, *World of Our Mothers*. In it she sought to identify the qualities and activities of immigrant mothers and the social structures in which they lived that led to differential achievement among a generation of Jews and Italians in America.

Her own parents, ardent socialists who were part of the group around Rosa Luxemburg, were important sources of Rose Coser's own striving and ideological commitment. Born in Berlin in 1916, she moved with them in 1924 to Antwerp, Belgium, where she lived and worked (as a printer, like her father) until the family emigrated to the United States in 1939 to escape Nazi persecution and the war looming in Europe. Working with an organization that helped refugees settle in the United States, in 1941 Rose Laub met Lewis Coser, another German socialist refugee who had been imprisoned in a French concentration camp. Married a year later, they formed an extraordinary intellectual and intimate partnership that is manifest in their collective work and celebrated in the acknowledgments to each other in their books and papers. Both, with Irving Howe, were founders of *Dissent* (and continued to be active members of the editorial board) and of the Democratic Socialists of America.

Rose Laub Coser studied philosophy in France and at the New School for Social Research before deciding to take a degree in sociology (as did Lewis Coser) at Columbia University, which she completed in 1957. In the late 1940s, she had worked as a research assistant to the child psychoanalyst René Spitz, and from 1948 to 1950 she assisted David Riesman on the projects that were to become *The Lonely Crowd* and *Faces in the Crowd*. Like many women in those years, Rose Coser did not follow a traditional career line. She progressed from instructor to assistant professor at Wellesley College between 1951 and 1959 and then went to the Department of Psychiatry at Harvard University where she became a research associate. Her work there resulted in a number of insightful (and delightful) papers including "Laughter Among Colleagues," a study of the social functions of humor in a mental hospital, "Evasiveness as a Response to Structural Ambivalence," and a book, *Training in Ambiguity: Social Structure and Professional Socialization in a Mental Hospital*. Three years after she became an associate professor at Northeastern University, Rose Laub Coser and Lewis Coser joined the sociology faculty at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, becoming one of the few academic couples in the country to serve in the same department. Until their retirement, the Cosers worked independently and together on a number of studies (on "greedy institutions" and legitimacy, for exam-

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ple), and made their home a center of intellectual and collegial sociability (and, at times, of activist ferment on issues of social justice) through monthly soirées.

Rose Coser's life could hardly be said to parallel that of her godmother Rosa Luxemburg, but there were elements of commitment and personal attachments that she shared with her. Although an activist when she thought it necessary (an ardent feminist, she instituted a class action suit at Stony Brook on behalf of women faculty and staff, and engaged in a sit-in at a male-only bar at the hotel hosting the 1972 American Sociological Association meetings in New Orleans), her calls to arms were not so much from the soapbox but from written works exploring the costs of ambiguity, the dynamics of subordination, the competition between institutional realms, the emancipating and inhibiting socialization practices of group culture. Her penetrating analysis of the mechanisms of society showed which factors contribute to the enhancement of the human spirit, indeed, to the forces that produce intelligence itself, and which stultify and constrain free expression.

In her last published book, *In Defense of Modernity: Complexity of Social Roles and Individual Autonomy* (1991), she wrote of modern society as a supportive environment for individualism against the constraints of traditionalism, superstition, and repression.

Rose Coser was an intellectual who expanded and reconceptualized theoretical frameworks. While other theorists dismissed functional theory, role theory, and modernism, she pushed these paradigms forward (one might say she deconstructed them) so as to explain complex processes, particularly those focused on the maintenance of hierarchy and subordination in the professions, the family, and more universally in social life.

Her work on role theory, for example, building on the work of her mentor, Robert K. Merton, shows how in modern society—unlike the homogeneous communities nostalgically evoked by contemporary social critics—people may take on multiple statuses and the roles that are attached to them, thus creating a wide social repertoire. But women, Coser argues, have historically been restricted from the acquisition of multiple and diverse roles, suffering more physical confinement than men as well as political and occupational restrictions. A classic paper, written with Lewis Coser, shows how the "greedy institution" of the family has restricted women's participation in public life. "Stay Home Little Sheba: On Placement, Displacement, and Social Change" (1975) argued that public policies denying women access to institutionalized child care make for social and political subordination.

Never content with one or two levels of social analysis, Rose Coser also showed how the cultural definitions of social groups have differential consequences for women. For example, in her study of "the world of our mothers," she described how the value placed on the scholarly activities of Jewish men encouraged and permitted immigrant Jewish women to play public roles outside the home and in the marketplace, giving them language skills and knowledge they could pass on to their children, enhancing their mobility in the new society. Antithetically, the restrictions on Italian women's participation in life outside the home limited the contacts and information they could bring to their children.

The melding of the personal, political, and intellectual, a phenomenon found in many creative people, was typified by Rose Coser. During the many times I experienced Rose's hospitality, I was always amazed by her ability to pay attention to the smallest details of friendship and intellectual exchange and at the same time to explore the large picture. Once, watching her cook a mammoth and intricate meal, a masterpiece of taste and design, I jokingly asked her what Rosa Luxemburg would say if she had seen Rose Coser stuffing cherry tomatoes. Rose cooly replied that Rosa would probably have pitched in. Indeed, the lesson of woman as social activist, intellectual, teacher, scholar, and wife, mother, host—that combination of statuses—interested Coser. She didn't focus only on the overload aspects of multiple statuses, but also noted how women, or men, benefited from complexity: many roles need not cause negative stress.

Mere structural accumulation, however, was

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not the whole picture, as Coser pointed out. Complexity could be straining or emancipating. It could be acknowledged or denied by the holders of multiple roles or the people close to them, or by society through its institutionalized perspectives. She observed that even when women left the home to assume other tasks, they are nevertheless defined according to their domestic status. As she wrote in our jointly edited book, *Access to Power: Cross-National Studies of Women and Elites*, both American women and Soviet women, who at that time each constituted about 50 percent of their country's work force, were recognized in their societies primarily in their family roles. As a result, though most worked in the public sector, they experienced gross overload in meeting the obligations of daily life, and faced severe limits on occupational mobility. She noted how this narrow view, universally found, forced women to cluster at the bottom of every occupational and public hierarchy.

Rose Coser tends to be known primarily for her work in medical sociology, on the family, and on gender issues; not for her contributions to sociological theory. But her work was always theoretically driven; even when most substantive, it evoked the patterned behaviors and institutional frameworks of each issue. She pushed theory forward, building and refining institutional analysis, providing conceptual tools for the dissection of social problems.

This brief memorial may remind her friends and colleagues of Rose Coser's eight books, scores of articles and book chapters, some of her formal accomplishments, and give some appreciation of her outstanding intellect. It makes, however, scant mention of her outstanding capacity for friendship; the way she made marriage and motherhood into partnerships for growth and love; her aesthetic tastes; and her zest for fighting for good causes and for the good life, not only for herself, but for all people. The zest especially will be remembered by everyone who worked with her in and around the feminist movement and on the editorial board of *Dissent*.

CYNTHIA FUCHS EPSTEIN

Note: An award for work in the Sociology of Gender is being established in Rose Laub Coser's name. Those who wish to contribute may send a check to The Eastern Sociological Society, Box U-68, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT 06269.

Remembering Rose

In September 1945 Rose Coser and I were new graduate students in the Department of Sociology at Columbia. She was from the beginning a vivid and forceful presence who used to sit in the front of Robert K. Merton's classes and ask probing questions in her soft but firm German-accented voice. Though still in her twenties, she was a few years older than most of us and inevitably assumed something of a leadership role. Professor Robert S. Lynd encouraged some of us to organize a Socialist Club—this was a time of great political hope with the war having just ended. Rose and I and several others drew up a statement of principles, including the assertion that we were "opposed to all forms of totalitarianism." This sounds innocuous enough today, but it was intended to signal our rejection of Stalinism, although only a few of us, of whom Rose was much the most politically sophisticated, were anti-Stalinists. (Lewis Coser did not become a student in the department until a few years later.) Our intention was understood, however, and we had trouble obtaining the signatures of second-year students needed to certify the club as a Columbia student organization, although eventually we did so.

One memory of that time conveys something of the impression Rose gave, at least to me as an innocent and idealistic youth. Rose and I and a young woman with whom I had a date for the evening were traveling downtown on the subway after Merton's class, straphanging in the center of the car—in those days the cars

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actually had leather straps attached to a central beam. I looked at Rose talking vigorously with her short hair, bright eyes, no makeup, and plain clothes and saw her as the embodiment of European socialist womanhood, easily to be imagined marching with banners in a demonstration against fascism and social injustice. By contrast, the other young woman, with her permanent and her elegantly fashionable dress, seemed a product of a protected, even spoiled, affluent American background. I remember what Rose was saying: she compared Freud and Erich Fromm, contending that Freud had too dark and pessimistic a view of human nature whereas it was possible to think of Fromm as a socialist.

I rather doubt, however, that Rose would have approved of the version of socialism that Fromm advanced in several of his later books, in which he affirmed the superiority of small cooperative communities against the fragmented and impersonal conditions of modern life. Rose was no sentimental celebrant of tightly knit "organic communities" or mourner for a lost *Gemeinschaft*: her last book was *In Defense of Modernity: Role Complexity and Individual Autonomy*, a title that virtually speaks for itself in grounding individual freedom and variety in the mosaic of modern life. Rose possessed a salutary toughness of mind. I recall her listening at an American Sociological Association meeting to a graduate student whine about having to acquire quantitative skills and telling him "Look, there are just some things you have to learn, like driving a car." She combined a thoroughgoing realism about the world with a firmly principled assessment of its failings, a dual capacity that is not so common these days. Her voice will be missed.

DENNIS WRONG □

FERENC FEHÉR 1933–1994

My friend Ferenc Fehér was a remarkably learned, eloquent, brilliant man. But he did not live a happy life, and suffered more than his share of injustice in three worlds. The Nazis murdered his father when he was still a boy. Then they tortured and almost killed young Ferenc as well. Next came communism; here Ferenc grew up and became one of Hungary's best minds—only to have the regime destroy his career and force him into exile. Finally, for his last sixteen years, he was in the West, where he never received the intellectual recognition that he deserved so well.

Still, nothing could diminish his pride, his sense of honor. As his father was being taken away to those infamous trains, he told his fourteen-year-old son: "Hold your head up as long as you've got it." Ferenc always did. When he finally returned to Budapest, amid the changes and reconstruction of the postcommunist era, young Hungarian intellectuals recognized him as the important philosopher that he was, and even as a historical figure. It seemed that he was finally to receive his due—status, honor, recognition. Then, suddenly, he was gone. It was a quick death, as he wanted, but it was an injustice that brought an end to his life twenty years too soon.

Ferenc never measured intellectual achievement--his own or anyone else's—by the criteria of the market, or networking, or bureaucratic adaptability. His gifts were prodigious, as were his achievements. He had excellent knowledge of at least six languages and wrote brilliantly in four of them; he had a thorough knowledge of philosophy, art, music, literature, history, social and political theory, and world politics; his skills were great as a public speaker and lecturer. He was a valued

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member of the *Dissent* editorial board since 1990.

Those of us who knew him knew how unique he was—surely, he knew too. He was one of the last Europeans whose learning was in the grand style. Although he may not have valued his own work as much as others did, he must have known that he had attained the highest levels of professional excellence. His book on Dostoyevsky (*Poet of Antinomies*) was among the finest achievements of the famous Budapest School that developed around Georg Lukács. His essays on Lukács were perhaps the most penetrating of Ferenc's writings; his critique of Soviet-style societies (*Dictatorship Over Needs,* written with his wife, Agnes Heller), was among the most sophisticated works of "Western Marxism"; his study of Jacobinism (*The Frozen Revolution*) ranks with the very best literature on the subject.

Like Lukács, his master, Ferenc Fehér quickly left behind what he had just written. He was always on to the next project, which always had to be better, much better. He knew how much his work was appreciated by those who counted most to him—Lukács, Agnes Heller, his peers and younger friends, readers in two dozen countries. Whether his subject was a theoretically informed historical study, or aesthetics, or literary criticism, or philosophy, or contemporary events, he applied the same refined, cultured intellect. He amazed us, but the only question for him was: which project is next?

Though his life was tragic and often unhappy, it was not unsuccessful. He used his great gifts as long as he could; he faced adversity with courage and was willing to reconstruct his life over and again; he was loved by many and capable of great love. His wife and son were exactly the wife and son he wanted. He had tender affection and admiration for them, and they stood by him in trying times. His students, from some twenty lands, learned from him what they could never have learned from others. If his intellectual work was incomplete, despite his many achievements, that is a thinker's fate today—so he, rightly, believed.

His funeral was the most beautiful I have experienced. It took place on a spring day in the Jewish section of a Budapest cemetery. It was a tasteful, a just sufficiently emotional testimony to and sorrowful celebration of him, appropriate to the special culture of assimilated Jewry he so eminently represented. The rabbi was sensitive and well spoken. George Konrad was moving and eloquent. The best of Hungary's intellectual life was there. In death, at least, Ferenc received his due.

ANDREW ARATO □

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David Bradley

LAYERS OF PARADOX

COLORED PEOPLE: A MEMOIR, by Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Alfred A. Knopf, 1994. 216 pp. $22.00.

Not long ago I was part of a "focus group." The idea of these things is that a publisher assembles some academics and asks them to assess the need for new materials in a given subject . . . to do market research, in other words. This group's focus was introductory American literature, and the session quickly became a group grappling with the question of whether any textbook or anthology could reconcile historical significance, literary importance, and aesthetic quality with contemporary demands for sociological sensitivity—for multiculturalism, in other words. Part of the problem, all agreed, was the inadequate preparation of most of today's incoming students. Another part, some admitted, was the inadequate preparation of some of today's teachers—ourselves included. One woman, who taught in one of those states where "diversity" means mixing brunettes with blondes, was especially frank. She was not only a WASP but an immigrant; for her to introduce works by black Americans to her students was, she felt, as for a blind person to teach signing to the deaf.

Support was offered. Solutions were suggested, the most comforting—and least practical—of which turned on technology: CD-ROM, Internet, the Information Superhighway. The Professor From the State of Blondes was excited by what might soon be appearing on a computer screen near her. Won't it be wonderful, she exclaimed, when a student can press a key and "have Henry Louis Gates pop up and explain African-American literature?"

That did not end the discussion—though it should have. It did make me think three thoughts. One: Gates would be appalled at the idea of *anybody* being the Carl Sagan of African-American (or Afro-American, or black, or whatever we're calling it this year) literature. Two: if somebody *had* to do the dirty job, Gates would be a fitting choice, not because of his B.A. from Yale or his Ph.D. from Cambridge, or his W.E.B. DuBois Professorship at Harvard, but because, unlike most critics in the field, who simply assume the point, Gates actually has addressed the question of what makes African-American literature African-American. Three: a mission I'd thought accomplished wasn't.

Said mission: to review Gates's latest book, not a work of literary criticism, but a memoir. I'd accepted the assignment because rumor had it the book was controversial and I just *love* a Negro intellectual chicken-fight. Rumor had the right of it; the book's preface alone would make feathers fly. Race purists would molt over Gates telling his daughters:

> I have written to you because of the day when we were driving home and you asked your mother and me just exactly what the civil rights movement had been all about and I pointed to a motel on Route 2 and said that at one time I could not have stayed there. Your mother could have stayed there, but your mother could not have stayed there with me.

Even moderate plumage would be ruffled by:

> I rebel at the notion that I can't be a part of other groups, that I can't construct identities through elective affinity, that race must be the most important thing about me. Is that what I want on my gravestone: Here lies an African American?

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That, from the chair of Harvard's Department of Afro-American Studies! Gates had clearly taken leave, if not of his own senses, then of the concord of sensibilities of the black intelligentsia. He even said some things sure to get him shunned at *white* cocktail parties. Like telling his daughters, with open relish, they would "go from being African Americans to 'people of color' to being, once again, 'colored people.'" But what was going to get him lynched was the memoir's title: *Colored People*.

Yet *Colored People* was not gratuitously confrontational. It was simply a personal analysis of the changes wrought by the SCLC, the NAACP, and the Warren Court that dared admit there had been costs as well as benefits. Though marred by vertiginous shifts in time, ellipses in narrative, and prose that was often vexatiously repetitive, *Colored People* was continually provocative, often evocative, and the rest of the time funny as hell. I had written a review that said so, and been about to send it off, when the Professor From the State of Blondes reminded me of something critical: Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *is* Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

Colored People, though autobiographical, it not about Henry Louis "Skip" Gates. It is "a story of a village, a family and its friends." The village is Piedmont, Mineral County, West Virginia. A typical dying mill town—the Westvaco paper mill, in this case—Piedmont today is characterized by "crumbling infrastructure and the resignation of its people." Today there are eleven hundred such people. In 1950, when Gates was born, there were twenty-five hundred—Italian, Irish, "a handful of wealthy WASPs on East Hampshire Street," and three-hundred-fifty colored people living on Back Street, Rat Tail Road, or, like Gates's extended family, "Up the Hill," on Erin Street.

Only a single block separated Erin Street from East Hampshire, but in Gates's childhood that meant distance, not proximity. The *Brown* decision demolished the legal basis of segregation when Gates was four; by the time he was seven Piedmont's public institutions—the schools, the swimming pool—were integrated. But Jim Crow, though no longer flying high, still had a comfortable roost. Piedmont's colored people could not work at the mill except on the loading dock—craft unions barred them. Piedmont's colored people could not try on clothes in stores. And:

> As much as we belonged to Piedmont, as much as Piedmont belonged to us, colored weren't allowed to own property. . . . It drove my mother crazy.

That last bit of bigotry had a great effect on Gates's adolescence. His childhood was more affected by quaint practices at a lunch counter called the Cut-Rate.

> It was as if there were a permanent TAKE-AWAY sign for colored people. You were supposed to stand at the counter, get your food to go, and leave. . . . After basketball games . . . the colored players had to stand around and drink out of paper cups while the white players and cheerleaders sat down in the red Naugahyde booths and drank out of glasses. Integrate? I'll shut it down first, Carl Dadisman had vowed. . . . he did not want us sitting in his booths, eating off his plates and silverware, putting our thick greasy lips all over his glasses.

Such descriptions are perennial in autobiographical writings by black Americans. In his 1845 *Narrative* Frederick Douglass noted that Northern prejudice prevented his plying the trade he'd learned as a Southern slave. In his 1901 autobiography, *Up From Slavery*, Booker T. Washington gave a detailed account of his first encounter with segregated accommodations. In the portion of his autobiography published in 1946 as *Black Boy*, Richard Wright called segregation "the terror from which I fled." All three were indignant about segregation—even Washington, who dismissed slavery itself as "the institution which the Nation unhappily had engrafted upon it." But Gates is *nostalgic* about it. He laments that his children "will . . . never experience the magic I can still feel in the place where I learned how to be a colored boy," and even likes the term colored, "because . . . I hear it in my mother's voice and the sepia tones of my childhood."

Gates does not force this nostalgia on the reader or insist that all Piedmont residents saw

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things through that sepia lens. In his first book, a work of literary criticism, *Figures in Black*, Gates asserted that Douglass's "legacy to contemporary black letters was his mastery of the trope of irony." In *Colored People*, he claims that inheritance; Gates knows well how to turn a phrase or twist an anecdote to give his nostalgia an acrid aftertaste and allow for visions less idyllic than his own:

> All things considered, white and colored Piedmont got along pretty well. . . . At least as long as colored people didn't try to sit down in the Cut-Rate or at the Rendezvous Bar, or eat pizza at Eddie's, or buy property, or move into the white neighborhoods, or dance with, date or dilate upon white people. Not to mention try to get a job in the craft unions at the paper mill. Or have a drink at the white VFW, or join the white American Legion, or get loans at the bank, or just generally get out of line. Other than that, colored and white got on pretty well.

Still, though he qualifies it with the phrase "or at least that's the color my memory has given it," Gates insists that "the fifties in Piedmont were a sepia time," and so often uses the word sepia that the book sometimes seems to read the way a D.W. Griffiths film looked.

To feel nostalgia for such a time may seem a bit obscene, but there are several factors that make Gates's feeling comprehensible. One is that, as a child, he saw no direct confrontations over segregation. The single civil rights protest on record took place before he was born. The schools desegregated "without a peep." Distant clashes seemed unreal:

> Every night we'd wait until the news to see what "Dr. King and dem" were doing. It was like watching the Olympics or the World Series when somebody colored was on. . . . It was almost like a war being fought overseas.

Another factor is that Gates was not in the vanguard of change; he credits his brother Rocky, six years older, with being "the pioneer" in many areas, and, especially, a "factor that eased my passage in school." Gates did have some problems. For instance, to give his own high school valedictory address, rather than one prepared for him, he had to act "surreptitiously, because this was not allowed." But he had his mother's blessing and coaching, and, eventually, the approval of the teacher he'd deceived:

> I searched the audience . . . to see her expression . . . she liked the speech and as good as told me so with a big wink at the end of the ceremony.

Yet another factor is that segregation in Piedmont was so contradictory as to be risible. For example, Gates's father could sit down at the Cut-Rate; but "Even when we were with Daddy. . . . we had to stand at the counter and order takeout, then eat on white paper plates using plastic spoons."

But the major reason Gates can feel nostalgic is that he grew up in a world, not of sight and sound, but of mind, where white laws, white customs, white *people* were irrelevant. Of that world he writes:

> Its inhabitants went to colored schools, they went to colored churches, they lived in colored neighborhoods, they ate colored food, they listened to colored music, and when all that fat and grease finally closed down their arteries or made their hearts explode, they slept in colored cemeteries, escorted there by colored preachers. . . . They dated colored, married colored, divorced and cheated on colored.

Prime exponents of this world were Gates's mother's clan, the Colemans, Piedmont's colored aristocracy, occupying—albeit not owning—the town's highest ground. "The first colored to own guns . . . the first to become Eagle Scouts, the first to go to college," the twelve children of his mother's generation were "the last conceived, born, and bred under segregation," and had

> carved out a dark-chocolate world . . . as nurturing as the loamy soil. . . . The tangle of family ties served as the netting that covered the garden's yield, setting it off from the chaos. . . . That netting kept out predators. . . . They would mouth the white man's commands in the day . . . and enact their own legislation . . . . in their sepia world at night.

Segregation was central to that legislation. Colemans divided their world according to criteria like "bad" or "good" hair and dark or

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light skin. They divided it by gender. At family dinners:

> the men would be seated first, at the formal dining table . . . while the women served them. They even served the boys first, before they returned to the kitchen to eat their own supper.

But the crucial division was Coleman or not-Coleman. Gates recollects:

> When I was nine or ten, the Coleman Family Reunion was the social event of the season. The only problem was that you had to be a Coleman. . . . Even if you were an in-law, you still weren't a Coleman. . . . Gateses . . . weren't Colemans.

Though born to Coleman status, Gates was more intrigued by his father's family. Gateses had been Mineral County landowners in the nineteenth century. In the 1920s they'd sold their rural holdings and moved to "the mysterious world of Cumberland, Maryland." Gateses . . .

> drank beer and Scotch, played cards, read detective novels and traded them with each other, did crossword puzzles, and loved puns. . . . The Colemans, by contrast, were the force of self-righteousness, teetotalers, non-smoking, non-gambling souls, who seemed to equate close-cropped, well-oiled hair and well-washed automobiles with the very purpose of life itself.

As Gateses never had family reunions Gates never saw them gathered until, at ten, he attended his paternal grandfather's funeral.

> The day was a revelation. Doctors and dentists, lawyers and pharmacists; Howard and Talladega, Harvard and Radcliffe—all of these careers and all of these schools were in my grandparents' living room, and each had a Gates face attached to it. It came as a shock to realize that these mythic characters . . . were actual brown and tan and beige people. And refined. And well spoken. Obviously comfortable in the world.

In time Gates decided he was "more like the Gateses than the Colemans." This identification was complicated, though, by conflict with his father.

> I was more aggressive around white people than Daddy, and it didn't go down well with him. . . . Daddy would almost never take my side in front of others. And if he felt I had violated a boundary, he would name it publicly and side with the boundary. He would do so loudly, even with what struck my child's ears as a certain malice. It tore me up.

The conflict had other aspects. Gates, as a child, was "short and round—not obese, mind you, but *fat*," which inspired his father to teasing, which Gates hated. Gates, Sr. also loved sports. Gates, Jr. was a poor athlete. "It's hard to catch a baseball with your eyes closed," he writes. There was, however, a reconciliation that Gates describes in a beautifully rendered scene:

> Pop and I . . . began the long walk up the hill. . . . I was exhausted, so we walked easy. He was . . . talking smaller steps than usual so I could keep up. "You know that you don't have to play baseball, don't you boy?" Oh, I want to play, I responded . . . "But you don't *have* to play. I was never a good player. Always afraid of the ball. . . ." That caramel ice cream sure tasted good . . . That day he knew me, and he seemed to care.

His rejection of the Colemans led Gates to decide that his mother, Pauline, "was totally unlike her sisters and brothers." In fact she epitomized them. Leaving school after junior high, she worked to put four brothers through college. In the 1940s, she spearheaded a demand for a colored high school. In 1957, she played a crucial role in school desegregation, as "the first colored secretary" of the Piedmont PTA:

> Before Mama started reading the minutes, colored people never joined the PTA. . . . They were still scared, but they couldn't let Mama down . . . so they'd dress up too, the women, and traipse on over to the PTA, just to see Mama read her minutes, just to represent the race, just to let those white people know that we was around here too.

Pauline's commitment was to the colored world:

> She didn't care to live in white neighborhoods or be around white people. . . . But most important of all, for Piedmont and me, she did not seem to fear white people. She simply hated them, hated them with a passion she seldom disclosed.

In the sixties, Gates writes, she voiced "more

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freely . . . her long-nurtured hatred of white people." Even in the fifties, she voiced it freely enough for him to clearly recall her words:

> White people, she said, were *dirty*: they tasted right out of pots on the stove. Only some kind of animal, or the lowest order of trash, would ever taste out of a pot on the stove. . . . White people . . . smelled bad, Mama always said. . . . When they get wet, she said, they smell like dogs.

Gates, at seven, tested this assertion at the swimming pool, approaching a white girl named Linda Hoffman with "nostrils flared, trying to breathe in as deeply as I could, prepared for the worst." The assertion was refuted; two years later Gates was in puppy love with Linda. But his mother's racism was not easily dismissed. Possibly it qualified his joy when his love was requited in front of a school assembly:

> [T]he magician . . . chose Hoffman. Pick your little boyfriend, honey, he said, I want Skippy, was all I heard Linda say. . . . I felt chagrined and maybe a little proud as I joined her on stage.

Certainly it astigmatized his view of Pauline. "There were," he writes, "rare occasions when I would look into her face and see a stranger." One of these occurred when Gates was nine:

> CBS aired a documentary about Black Muslims . . . just about the scariest black people I'd ever seen. . . . While I sat cowering in our living room, I happened to glance over at my mother. A certain radiance was slowly transforming her soft brown face, as she listened to Malcolm X naming the white man the Devil. "Amen," she said, quietly at first. "All right now," she continued, much more heatedly. All this time, and I hadn't known just how deeply my mother despised white people. It was like watching the Wicked Witch of the West emerge out of the transforming features of Dorothy. . . . The same thing would happen several years later when the Martin Luther King riots were shown on television. The first colored secretary of the Piedmont PTA watched the flames with dancing eyes.

It is Pauline's life story that gives *Colored People* narrative structure. Its essence is foreshadowed in Gates's line about the prohibition on colored land ownership driving his mother crazy. That is not hyperbole; Pauline believed "the key to wealth and comfort in America was owning property." The way to wealth was opened when one Coleman brother broke the color bar and purchased the family homestead. Pauline, hoping to buy adjoining land and "build a sort of family complex," "was all excited. Radiant, in fact." But Gates, Sr., refused to sign the papers.

Gates speculates that Pauline never recovered from that disappointment, but her story was already a tragedy-in-progress. The first act opened in 1962, when she became menopausal and clinically depressed. "A veil," Gates writes, "passed over her life, dimming her radiance." She gained weight, talked of dying "for hours," hoarded obsessively, cleaned compulsively. Her behavior infected Gates:

> I had developed all sorts of rituals. I would . . . walk around the kitchen table only from right to left . . . I would approach a chair from its left side, not the right . . . I crossed my legs right calf over left, and never, ever, the other way around.

One morning, "For a reason that seemed compelling at the time," Gates crossed his legs in reverse. That afternoon, Pauline was committed:

> I could never shake the idea that if only I hadn't dared fate to punish me, by crossing my legs the wrong way around, Mama wouldn't have become sick and gone to the hospital. It was a sense of guilt so enormous that I couldn't talk to anyone about it.

Gates's desire to atone drove him to religion and the Colemans' righteous ways, and eventually to innocently initiate the tragedy's third act.

> I came home from college one summer. . . . When Mama opened the door, I saw her as if for the first time: so old and tired and despondent. The years of having her hair done had damaged her hair so much that she was going bald. She'd taken to wearing a wig. I know I look bad, she said, wiping her forehead where the sweat ran down from under her wig.

Not understanding that, as he now writes, Pauline's passion was for "a piece of *earth*," Gates pooled resources with his father and

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brother to buy Pauline a house. The one selected, on East Hampshire Street, had belonged to a white woman for whom Pauline once worked. With the purchase all but consummated Pauline resisted moving. Gates pleaded with her. After a "pitched battle" she gave in. But in the aftermath of a celebratory feast she revealed that the white woman:

> used to make me sit out in the kitchen . . . and eat the scraps. . . . She used to leave money around, to see if I would steal it. She made me work on Thanksgiving and Christmas. . . . The thought of moving into this house . . . I wanted to burn this house down.

Despite the power of this scene, it seems Gates's insight—and insight is the essence of irony—fails here. "I'll never know," he writes, "if we did the right thing by buying her that house, or whether our insistence on vindicating her was somehow misguided." Few readers will find the matter indeterminate; many more will be confused that Gates, in a confusing time shift, then leaps years beyond the last scene of *Colored People* to follow his mother's story to 1986, when Pauline, deeply depressed, was again hospitalized. In a room she shared with a white woman, Pauline suffered what appears to have been a heart attack. She lingered on life-support, while her family, including Gates's wife and children, gathered. Pauline, a woman born in a "nurturing" colored world, raised under the protective "netting" of a colored family, died in a now-integrated hospital, surrounded by a now-integrated family.

At first it seems Gates captures all this with a perfect ironic image: "It was about midnight when we agreed not to shock her heart any more." But, on second reading, it seems Gates is actually unaware of the irony, for rather than ending the scene with that line, he adds a sentence that is as syntactically confused as it is emotionally sentimental: "I had told her how much I loved her, and she had smiled that deep-down smile, something to take with her on the road."

And on second thinking, this instance of unawareness seems symptomatic of a deeper flaw: Gates's irony, precise and powerful on the level of language and anecdote, falters with regard to larger narrative structures—the tragedy of his mother's life, the paradoxes of his own. "My darkest fear," he writes in his preface, "is that Piedmont, West Virginia, will cease to exist, if some executives on Park Avenue decide . . . to build a completely new paper mill elsewhere." Though this fear is never realized, in *Colored People*'s final scene (which seems to have taken place in the seventies) Gates describes the demise of the colored millworkers' picnic, blaming it on distant authority:

> The mill administration itself made the decision, it said, because the law forbade separate but equal everything, including picnics.

A bit later, he makes the picnic a symbol of community—and again blames the presumably white mill management for its destruction:

> Negroes gathered to say goodbye to themselves, their heritage, and their sole link to each other, wiped out of existence by the newly enforced anti-Jim Crow laws. The mill didn't want a lawsuit like the one brought against the Swordfish.

A bit earlier he has dealt with the matter in the passive voice:

> So much was the way I remembered . . . and yet a new age had plainly dawned, an age that made . . . a segregated picnic seem an anachronism.

What is missing is any coherent exposition of Gates's own role in creating that new age. Elsewhere in the text Gates reveals he worked one summer in the mill, "hired for the express purpose of encouraging a few black people to transfer to the craft unions." Three months later every union in the mill was integrated, making a colored picnic seem less appropriate. At another point in the text Gates reveals that the Swordfish, a whites-only club, was shut down after he and some friends were ejected and called in the State Human Rights Commission. This created the precedent followed by the mill. Thus, Gates was instrumental in destroying the ultimate object of his nostal-

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gia—and colored Piedmont's "most beloved, and cementing, ritual."

He wreaked similar havoc on the Coleman family. His adolescent rebellions against racism caused friction between him and his uncles, and forced his mother to make "a painful choice" between her brothers and her son. As a freshman in a local college he publicly violated the tenets of people who "dated colored, married colored." After transferring to Yale and leaving Piedmont, he returned to disrupt the Coleman Christmas dinner:

> I brought my wife, Sharon, to dinner up there in 1973. When she sat down at the table with the men, you could have heard a pin drop. But the women served her too.

Gates couches this incident in terms of a woman sitting with the men. More relevantly, it is a white woman sitting among colored men—while colored women serve them. Gates elsewhere indicates what that meant:

> Certainly the borders of our world seemed to be encroached upon when some white man or woman would show up where he or she did not belong . . . Our space was violated when one of *them* showed up.

Here he simply says, "That was our last Christmas Up the Hill." In fact it was an assault on a tradition by an heir to that tradition—arguably justifiable, but every bit as confrontational as it would have been, twenty years earlier, for a colored man to ask for a room at that motel on Route 2, with or without a white wife.

Gates's role in bringing change to Piedmont was obviously significant in fact; it should be more clearly significant here. By failing to make it so Gates denies dramatic support to a point he makes expositorially: "Nobody wanted segregation, you understand, but nobody thought of this as segregation." Worse, by failing to give his role coherent explication, he deprives *Colored People* of power and complexity. Worst, he creates the no doubt erroneous impression that he himself does not comprehend the meaning and power of his own story. In his preface he tells his daughters "a world that nurtured and sustained me, has mysteriously disappeared." In fact there is no mystery; only the irony that his daughters will never know the world that created him because he grew far enough beyond it to create them. It is a pity Gates did not emphasize that irony; it would have made *Colored People* not only provocative but profound.

I could leave the matter there were Gates not the Gates who some think can explain African-American literature at the press of a function key. But Gates *is* Gates, and what he would no doubt offer were he to pop up on-screen is the "Theory of African-American Literary Criticism" articulated in his most prominent work of literary criticism, *The Signifying Monkey*. Gates expounded his theory using autobiographical writings; it would seem unfair not to apply it to his own. When that is done, though, the results are . . . troubling.

The theory asserts that the "discrete black difference" that makes African-American literature African-American is that black writers "read each other's texts and seize upon topoi and tropes to revise their own texts," thus creating "curious formal lines of continuity between the texts." Gates calls this "Signify-in(g)" and charts several types. One is "capping," which Gates illustrates using two eighteenth-century texts, the slave narrative of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw and the Indian captivity narrative of John Marrant:

> Marrant is capping upon Gronniosaw's trope because his revision seeks to reverse the received trope by displacement and substitution. All the key terms of Gronniosaw's trope are present in Marrant's revision, but the "original" pattern has been rearranged significantly.

Some of the strongest passages in *Colored People* can be read as capping. The story of Linda and the magician can be read against this, from W.E.B. DuBois's *Souls of Black Folk*:

> I was a little tyke . . . In a wee wooden schoolhouse something put it into the boys' and girls' heads to buy gorgeous visiting cards . . . and exchange . . . one girl, a tall newcomer, refused my card—refused it peremptorily, with a

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> glance. Then it dawned on me with a certain suddenness that I was different from the others . . . shut off from their world by a vast veil.

Gates's response to his grandfather's funeral can be read against this, from DuBois's *Autobiography*:

> [M]y grandfather arose, filled the wineglasses and raised his glass and touched the glass of his friend, murmuring a toast. I had never before seen such a ceremony: I had read about it in books . . . I suddenly sensed in my grandfather's parlor what manners meant and how people of breeding behaved and were able to express. . .

Gates's walk home with his father can be read against this, from James Baldwin's *Notes of a Native Son*:

> We were walking, just the two of us, in our usual silence. . . . My father asked me abruptly, "You'd rather write than preach, wouldn't you?" . . . I answered "Yes." That was all we said. It was awful to remember that was all we had *ever* said.

Similarly, Gates's graduation speech sequence can be read against the sequence in *Black Boy* where Wright openly (not "surreptitiously") rejects the prepared speech, is discouraged by his uncle (rather than encouraged by his mother) to write and deliver his own, and after doing so, rather than looking for reactions, "did not care if they liked it or not." Pauline's fantasy of burning down the Thomas house can be read against Wright's opening—he actually sets fire to his own family's house. Gates's presence at Pauline's deathbed can be read against Booker T. Washington's lament, in *Up From Slavery*, that he was absent when his mother died, though he "always had an intense desire to be with her when she did pass away." Even Gates's nostalgia can be seen as a capping of the responses to segregation of Douglass, Washington, and Wright.

Absent Gates's theory, such comparisons—many more are possible—would be intriguing. Present the theory, they are problematical. Its application, while showing how *Colored People* is connected to the so-called African-American literary tradition, also raises the possibility that some of the book's most eloquent sequences are shaped more by tradition than by Gates's aesthetic judgment or subjective experience, or even by objective fact. It also suggests that the memoir's major flaw is a result of Gates writing to fulfill the theory, for in *The Signifying Monkey* he declared that "the black autobiographical tradition . . . generally depicts a resplendent self as representative of possibilities denied to one's . . . fellow blacks," and sarcastically skewered Richard Wright for setting himself up as "among those few Negroes who could tell not only their own story but also the woeful tale of their pathetic voiceless black countrymen." In *Colored People*, he may have deemphasized his role in order to both avoid Wright's pretension and to comment on it, via Signifyin(g). But what all *that* suggests about the function of factual accuracy, artistic inspiration, and individual expression in autobiographical expressions by blacks is very hard to say.

And saying anything is made more difficult by another of Gates's critical notions, expressed in *Figures in Black*. There Gates de-emphasized the distinction between fiction and non-fiction, postulating that Frederick Douglass had "carefully crafted that public image by which he determined he should be recalled . . . a self Douglass created, manipulated, and transformed, if ever so slightly, through three fictive selves he posited in his three autobiographies." He praised Douglass for making "his life . . . the vehicle for a social program" and for serving "as editor and censor of even the smallest bits of data about his life until he had rendered them in language as part of the public self."

Gates's approbation of Douglass is in keeping with the tradition of American autobiography. As Benjamin Franklin wrote of his prototypical *Autobiography*:

> To shorten the work, as well as for other reasons, I omit all the facts and transactions that may not have a tendency to benefit the young reader, by showing him from my example, and my success in emerging from poverty, and acquiring some degree of wealth, power and reputation, the advantages of certain modes of conduct which I observed, and of avoiding errors which were prejudicial to me.

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Gates is as free of Franklin's pretensions as he is of Wright's. But the opening of *Colored People* does address his daughters, "Dear Maggie and Liza," as Franklin's opening addresses his "Dear Son," and at least part of Gates's intention was to shape the perceptions of the young. He recalls his anger when Maggie rejected his loving description of his late mother, and writes, "I found myself wishing that Maggie could have seen my mother when she was young." His portrait of Pauline surely makes that possible.

But this is 1994, not 1788, or 1845; contemporary readers tend to expect that an autobiography will be shaped primarily by internal factors—the author's individual experience, hard-won insights, and personal symbols. Gates's theory suggests that autobiographies by African-Americans are and should be shaped by external factors—political need, or the work of other African-American autobiographers. This complicates my reading of *Colored People*. I can say it is a brilliant expression of the African-American literary tradition. What I cannot say is what Gates's memoir—or his memories—has gained or lost thereby. □

Richard Wolin

ROOTS OF FASCISM

THE BIRTH OF FASCIST IDEOLOGY, by Zeev Sternhell (with Mario Sznajder and Maia Asheri), translated by David Maisel. Princeton University Press, 1994. 338 pp. $29.50.

Until recently, the question of the origins of fascist ideology seemed a fairly academic affair. Not only have the events of World War II receded in historical memory, but the collapse of communism made it appear that the "age of totalitarianism" itself had become a thing of the past. To be sure, the Iberian fascisms of Franco and Salazar persisted until the late 1970s. But when the "epoch of fascism" is mentioned, one thinks of the dictatorships of Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini. And one need not subscribe to the "end of history" thesis to appreciate the fact that their time has past.

Despite the plausibility of the "epoch of fascism" thesis, suggesting that it was a one-time, mid-twentieth-century phenomenon, contemporary European politics indicates that one should be wary of closing the book too soon. In the Italian elections of March 1994, the neofascist National Alliance captured 14 percent of the vote. Six weeks later, it gained five ministerial positions in the cabinet of media magnate and newly ordained prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi. For the first time in the postwar period, neofascists have been brought into the government of a major European power.

Were the Italian instance an aberration, it could be written off without further concern. But this is far from the case. In Germany, the misleadingly named neofascist Republican party, headed by former SS man Franz Schönhuber, has over the course of the last five years regularly garnered from 5 percent to 15 percent of the vote in local elections. In France, Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front has performed even better, threatening to pass the beleaguered Socialists in recent electoral contests. Neofascist parties have even made inroads in the low countries. This is to say nothing of the situation in Croatia, the Ukraine, or elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

All of which underlines the timeliness and importance of Zeev Sternhell's newly translated study of the ideological basis of fascist rule.

When it comes to probing the intellectual origins of fascism, Sternhell is hardly a newcomer. Over a period that spans three decades and several important books, he has refined a highly controversial, though far from implausible, interpretation of the roots of European fascism. The most central and contested aspects of Sternhell's thesis concern the following points: (1) in its purest form fascist ideology emerged first in France rather than in Italy or Germany, where it subsequently migrated and entrenched itself; (2) when its origins are closely studied, fascism appears as the historical heir to a certain left-wing or

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revolutionary socialist critique of capitalist civilization.

It is easy to see why Sternhell's claims have been so vigorously contested—above all, in France, where the myth that fascism, instead of having indigenous roots, was something foisted upon an unwilling nation by brutal German conquerors has been a *point d'honneur* of long standing among nationalistically inclined French historians.

To appreciate how controversial his interpretation has become, it is worth taking a brief look at the fate of his previous book, *Neither Right Nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France* (1983, translated into English in 1986). For in many respects, *The Birth of Fascist Ideology* deepens and refines the interpretive perspective developed in the earlier work.

In *Neither Right Nor Left* Sternhell seeks to show that France, instead of remaining impermeable to the political culture of fascism, was its seedbed. In the wake of the Dreyfus affair, there emerged a crucial alliance of Sorelians and Maurrassians—that is, of left and right—in the form of a short-lived publication known as the *Cahiers Proudhon* (1911). The two groups shared a boundless contempt for French Republicanism and all it stood for: compromise, plutocracy, philosemitism, parliamentarianism, materialism, lack of patriotism, and so forth. For Georges Sorel—who is the pivotal figure of *Neither Right Nor Left* as well as *The Birth of Fascist Ideology*—it was the Dreyfus affair that demonstrated the pro-parliamentary, nonrevolutionary essence of French socialism. Thereafter, Sorel realized that, given his antidemocratic predilections, he had more in common with Maurras and the *Action Française* crowd than he did with his former allies on the left.

Ephemeral though they may have been, in Sternhell's view the *Cahiers Proudhon* were a harbinger of things to come. Throughout the inter-war period, which was the heyday of European fascism, droves of disillusioned leftists made their way rightward. In the mid-1920s, former socialist Georges Valois founded the avowedly national socialist *Faisceau*, though, as with the *Cahiers Proudhon*, its influence and impact were fairly limited. Sternhell also notes the case of the influential Belgian socialist Henri de Man (uncle of the recently defrocked deconstructionist critic Paul), who, in the 1920s, called for an ethical revision of Marxism that a decade later would feed readily into fascist currents. De Man was an admirer of Mussolini, with whom he corresponded in the 1930s. Following Belgium's defeat in 1940, he became a leading collaborator and was sentenced to death in absentia after the war.

Further substance to Sternhell's claims is provided by the cases of Jacques Doriot, Marcel Déat, and Gaston Bergery. All were leading figures on the French left in the 1930s who, disillusioned with prospects for radical social change, moved in the direction of a national populism that, in retrospect, bears marked affinities with the spirit of Vichy. Also of interest is the case of Emmanuel Mounier, philosopher of "personalism" and founder of the left-Catholic review *Esprit*. Like so many others of his generation, Mounier viewed the fall of France as a deliverance from the vacillations and corruptions of the Third Republic. For a year or so, he had no compunctions about achieving a lively modus vivendi with France's so-called "national revolution." However, after his review was banned and frictions with the Vichy regime developed, he went on to become a leading figure of the resistance.

Sternhell's insinuation that French political culture was significantly marked by the "fascist impregnation" provoked a welter of refutations among historians of the "franco-French" stripe. The debates were so contentious that they gave rise to what has been dubbed the "Sternhell controversy" concerning the extent of native French fascism. Historians on the left resented the suggestion that it was in fact disenchanted leftists (such as Sorel and others) who were primarily responsible for nurturing the fascist bacillus. Those on the right felt that, with his claims concerning the originality and virulence of French fascism, Sternhell, an Israeli historian writing in French, had committed a type of *lèse-nation*, sullying the national patrimony.

The entire affair took a bizarre turn when the

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economist Bertrand de Jouvenel, accused by Sternhell in *Neither Right Nor Left* of pro-Nazi leanings, sued the historian for libel and won a token judgment of one franc. In a surreal dénouement, Raymond Aron collapsed and died on the courthouse steps immediately after testifying on de Jouvenel's behalf.

To those familiar with Sternhell's earlier work, the point of departure of *The Birth of Fascist Ideology* will come as little surprise: the peculiar alliance of revolutionary ideologues on the left and right in post–Dreyfus Affair, pre–World War I France. For Sternhell, it is this all-important historical conjuncture—and not the post–World War I years emphasized in most other accounts—that represents the definitive gestation period for fascist ideology. This was the era of the celebrated "crisis of Marxism": decades after Marx's prophecies concerning capitalism's imminent demise, the proletarian revolution had failed to materialize. The gains of the imperialist era seemed to prolong indefinitely capitalism's life span. A "labor aristocracy" had emerged, allowing a privileged stratum of the working class to identify with an otherwise exploitative system. In general, workers seemed capable of aspiring only to a "trade union consciousness"; more radical political demands ceased to interest them. Second International theoreticians such as Eduard Bernstein pronounced a revolutionary break with the capitalist system superfluous. Socialist goals could instead be attained via evolutionary means. In droves socialists accustomed themselves to the requirements of bourgeois electoral party politics. Marxism's revolutionary thrust seemed but a distant memory.

It was under these circumstances that Sorel undertook his revision of Marxism. In 1906 he published his landmark *Reflections on Violence*. In it, not only did he break definitively with the parliamentary mentality of Jean Jaurès and the French socialists; borrowing generously from the doctrines of Henri Bergson and Friedrich Nietzsche, he also developed his "myth" of the proletarian general strike. The virtue of great myths was that, because they were irrational, they could not be refuted by reality. At the time the ideals of revolutionary socialism may have been moribund; but a glorious myth, sanctified through great acts of heroism and violence, could reverse the situation instantaneously. A resurgence of myth would provide the proletariat with an undying faith in their appointed historical mission in a way that a strictly rational Marxist orthodoxy—"scientific socialism"—never could.

Such was the first stage of the revision of Marxism proffered by Sorel, who was politically allied with revolutionary syndicalism. Though it would prove highly influential, this version of Sorel's revision of Marxism ultimately came to grief. Revolutionary syndicalism continually lost ground to the predominant reformist currents of socialism. Sorel soon concluded that the *embourgeoisement* of the proletariat had progressed so far that it was no longer susceptible to being inspired by great myths. Sorel rapidly lost faith in the working class's revolutionary potential. The stage was thus set for the bizarre partnership he would establish with the Maurrassians.

Both parties were firmly convinced that the inferior political legacy of the nineteenth century, parliamentary democracy, must be eliminated at all cost. As Sternhell explains, Sorelians and Maurrassians shared

> a horror of bourgeois democracy, the eighteenth century, the secular spirit, and the French Revolution but also a respect for classical tradition and culture. Sorel's vigorous campaign against the philosophy of the Enlightenment explains his attractiveness for the Maurrassians; this was the common ground between the revolutionaries, who had come from a Marxism divested of its materialistic and rationalistic essence, and the integral nationalists, promoters of a nationalism likewise divested of its materialistic and rationalistic essence—that is, its liberalism, its individualism, and its conception of society as an aggregate of individuals.

Under the influence of the Maurrassians, Sorel would soon conclude that, faced with a nonrevolutionary proletariat, the myth of "the nation" could mobilize the masses more effectively than that of the general strike. In

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this way the alliance between revolutionary syndicalism and the integral nationalism of the *Action Française* was forged. Thus were the seeds of an indigenous French "national socialism" sown, foreshadowing the more politically potent manifestations that would emerge in the 1920s and 1930s. Its program would be well captured in Pierre Drieu La Rochelle's felicitously titled 1934 work, *Socialisme fasciste*.

The idea of an anti-Marxist "national socialism" was pervasive among early twentieth-century "conservative revolutionaries" (who should be contrasted with restoration-oriented traditional conservatives). In 1919 Oswald Spengler published his influential *Prussianism and Socialism*, suggesting that a postmonarchist German conservatism would need to incorporate the antiplutocratic demands of the working classes if it wished to succeed in an age of mass politics. And of course, as Sternhell shows well, Mussolini was a leading figure of the Italian Socialist party until he, too, partly under the influence of Sorel, arrived at the conclusion that it was the myth of the nation, and not the proletariat, that held the key to the overthrow of the liberal system. To be sure, once in power, few traces remained of Mussolini's socialist roots. But anyone who doubts their relevance to the ideology of Italian fascism should examine the program of the Italian Social Republic at Salò (a Nazi puppet state) during the last two years of the war. Ironically, it was the German National Socialists who maintained the least fidelity to the socialist critique of capitalism. This was especially true after the party's left wing, associated with Ernst Röhm and Gregor Strasser, was purged in the "night of the long knives" on June 30, 1934.

Development of the Sorel-Mussolini connection is one of the keys to Sternhell's argument concerning the Gallic origins of fascist ideology. For even if previous historians have underestimated the strength and staying power of French fascism, there can be little doubt that, until France's "strange defeat" in 1940, fascism there never possessed the political vitality and influence of its Italian or German variants.

Sorel of course was one of the most influential figures for Italian syndicalism. Many syndicalist leaders were convinced Sorelians who, following World War I, made the switch to fascism with remarkable facility. It is also true that Mussolini was an avowed Sorel enthusiast, an avid reader of his texts and admirer of his principles. Like the *maître* himself, the future *Duce* came to the conclusion during the war that it was not class struggle but the glories of combat that offered the best means of inciting the populace toward the revolutionary destruction of the democratic system. Sternhell and his associates' chronicle of Mussolini's transformation from socialist firebrand to integral nationalist demagogue is effective and compelling—it should be required reading for those interested in the genesis and malleability of twentieth-century ideology.

But the limitations of this argument are also clear. There existed an important difference between Mussolini the revolutionary leader and Mussolini the fascist head of state. In almost all cases, the same historical tension can be found between fascism as a revolutionary "movement" and the more conservative bent it displays once in power. Thus, faced with the challenges of governing, Mussolini proceeded to compromise with social forces—monarchy, church, and industry—for which he as a revolutionist had shown nothing but contempt. Following the purges of June 30, 1934, many of Hitler's supporters were also convinced that he had abandoned the movement's revolutionary dynamism and turned conservative. Turning to Vichy, Pétain and others may have succeeded, with considerable German help, in abrogating the liberal system; but, as a national authoritarian regime, there was certainly little that was revolutionary—let alone "Sorelian"—about its program.

Sternhell has an answer for this discrepancy between "movement" and "regime," but it is not an entirely satisfactory one. He claims that it is fascism as a *movement* that is the real McCoy or fascism in its pure state; once it attains power, sclerosis sets in and it ceases to be pure. But this is merely a convenient way of saving an ideologically pure version of fascism that at times bears little resemblance to

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historically existing fascist regimes. There is something unreal and slightly Platonic about the attempt to hold up an ideologically pristine fascism in opposition to its real political manifestations. In this way, the ideal becomes more "real" than what is really real. Be that as it may, one can say with certainty that Sternhell's contribution to our understanding of the ideological origins of European fascism is indispensable.

In conclusion, it is worth returning to the question of what light an analysis such as Sternhell's can shed on the contemporary resurgence of European fascism or so-called neofascism. Sternhell himself has perhaps best addressed this question in a short pamphlet on the problem of "Anti-semitism and the Right in France" (Jerusalem: Institute of Contemporary Jewry, 1985).

Sternhell's study shows how widespread, potent, and variegated were the ideological forces that ultimately constituted fascist doctrine. In many ways, the latter resulted from a fateful merger of tendencies drawn from revolutionary syndicalism, integral nationalism, and anti-Semitism, as well as from impulses fed by disillusioned monarchists and socialists. What was it that was able to turn this strange intellectual amalgam into veritable ideological bedfellows? The answer is a shared revulsion toward the liberal democratic order. All were convinced that any and every means needed to be employed to rid Europe of this pedestrian and unexalted form of political rule. This extreme aversion to liberalism was thus the unifying factor of the otherwise highly syncretic fascist ideology.

The resurgence of the extreme right in Europe today demonstrates that the ideological forces analyzed by Sternhell, though vanquished in 1945, are far from extinct. And although their electoral successes have been sporadic and marginal, they pose several dangers. For in many European nations (the France of Le Pen's National Front is perhaps the best example) they have succeeded in shifting the terms of political discourse to the point where questions of ethnicity and race occupy center stage. Perhaps at least as significant, in many instances they have compelled Europe's traditional right-wing parties to adopt xenophobic positions in order to tap into the growing electoral constituency of the new right parties. In essence, by donning a guise of parliamentary legality and feigning allegiance to the constitution, the rejuvenated extreme right seeks to call into question as far as possible the civil liberties of the democratic order.

The various antidemocratic tendencies that earlier in our century crystallized to form fascist ideology might be dormant, but they are not dead. This means that a historical understanding of the origins of fascism, far from being an academic exercise, remains an urgent intellectual task. □

Josephine Woll

ILLUMINATING A CULTURAL MOOD

MODERNISM AND REVOLUTION: RUSSIAN LITERATURE IN TRANSITION, by Victor Erlich. Harvard University Press, 1994. 314 pp. $45.00.

On the first page of his introduction, Victor Erlich refers to Irving Howe's "still resonant" essay "The Idea of the Modern." It was Howe, many years ago, who suggested to Erlich that he was the right man to unravel the fierce tangle of literary modernism and political radicalism that characterized the decade and a half after the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

It will come as no surprise to readers of *Dissent* that Howe's editorial judgment was sound. Neither will it surprise the many students of Russian literature who have learned from Erlich directly, at Yale, or indirectly, from his scholarship and especially his groundbreaking book on Russian Formalism. His book is the graceful product of a lifetime steeped in Russian culture: penetrating and judicious, full of thoughtful assessments of complicated writers in a turbulent time. Thanks to his clear prose and his gift for setting ideas and events in context, Erlich has written a book not just for specialists, but for all readers with an interest in how Russian writers responded to

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the ferment that ended by swallowing up so many of them.

In prerevolutionary Russia, the artists of the so-called "Silver Age" were members of an intelligentsia that shared a revulsion against the czarist autocracy and a profound dedication to social change. With the new century, and especially after the strikes and upheavals of 1905, poets and writers produced an aesthetic variant of these social values: an apocalyptic vision that combined an intuition of impending doom with the hope of creating a new culture. "To wash away the mind's memory . . . and come out naked like the first man, naked, joyous and light, remembering nothing of the past except how heavy and stifling those clothes were"—this wish, expressed in 1921 by the eminent literary and cultural historian Mikhail Gershenzon, was felt in the decade before the revolution by Symbolists and Futurists alike.

In his first chapters Erlich traces the heritage bequeathed by these movements to the Modernists. It was a complex and contradictory legacy. The Symbolists, especially the poets Alexander Blok and Andrei Biely, passed on a stew of self-hatred and guilt toward the poor, nostalgia for lost innocence (usually located in the "simple" life), fascination with destruction, and recognition of the artist's need for creative freedom. The deliberately cruder and more negative Futurists (Kruchonykh, Khlebnikov, Shershenevich, Livshits, Mayakovsky) forged their identity out of a repudiation of all traditions, presenting themselves—as outrageously as possible—as the misunderstood harbingers of the future. For Mayakovsky, the most brilliant of the Futurist poets, the wooden spoon he wore as a boutonniere was the sartorial equivalent of his fierce poetic hyperbole: the more gasps he provoked, the happier he was. Like its French, English, American, and Italian counterparts, Russian modernism was characterized by a sense of discontinuity with the recent past and a perception of a fragmented and disturbing present. Recoiling from the past, modernism vaulted into a dreamt-of-future—via quasi-political fantasies, via aesthetic innovation, and often enough via both. When the long anticipated cataclysm came, in 1917, precisely that espousal of radical novelty "made many of [modernism's] leading figures receptive to Bolshevik rhetoric."

The bulk of Erlich's book is devoted to these figures and their response to the new society that emerged in the 1920s. He discusses as a group the four poetic horsemen of Russia's apocalypse—Mandelstam, Pasternak, Akhmatova, and Tsvetaeva—and then turns to individuals: Babel, Zamyatin, Zoshchenko, Mayakovsky, and less familiar writers such as Andrei Platonov, Viktor Shklovsky, and Lev Lunts. He is consistently nuanced, often distilling complex insights into a single phrase (he speaks of Bely's "characteristic overexplicitness," for instance, two words that open up one of the main problems in Bely's work).

Rather than analyze all the works of any one writer, Erlich examines the writers, a few of their individual works, and their characteristic aesthetic strategies to illuminate Russia's cultural mood at that time. Thus, in his chapter on Boris Pilnyak, a gifted if uneven prosaist, Erlich explores the "seeming compositional anarchy" of Pilnyak's most famous novel, *The Bare Year*—its mixture of diary extracts, letters, anecdotes, slogans, and obscenities—as the verbal equivalent of profoundly traumatizing historical conditions. Andrei Platonov creates for his often semiliterate characters a mouthful of marbles: a peculiar linguistic olio of political propaganda, desiccated abstractions, grammatical solecisms, and folk simplicity that "gropes toward making sense out of a bewildering, topsy-turvy, dislocated reality."

Erlich sketches enough background to place each writer intellectually, using biography to explain adult choices, both political and artistic. Sometimes what requires explanation is ideological commitment. More often, what requires explanation is ambivalence, "one of the leitmotifs of the decade." Nearly all of the writers Erlich discusses were "fellow travelers," sympathetic to at least the aims of the Bolsheviks. Moreover, in its early days Bolshevism offered the tantalizing promise of a way for intellectuals and artists to expiate their burden of guilt about the advantages of the class they were born into. Most of them were

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torn between acknowledging the value of the old world and rejecting it, between welcoming the Dawn of History and defending artistic autonomy from the encroachments of increasingly repressive political forces. (Few were as clear-sighted as Zamyatin, who early on warned of the "Gospel of Compulsory Salvation" in his novella "The Islanders," and who portrayed in his 1920 novel *We* the twin perils of social engineering and ideological force-feeding.)

In the chaotic conditions during and immediately after the Civil War, when the Bolsheviks had other things to worry about, the qualified acquiescence of the fellow-travelers was adequate. But as the 1920s wore on, their room for maneuver shrank significantly. Pilnyak, who welcomed the revolution as a purifying and anarchic elemental storm, had trouble reconciling that vision with liberation through technology, byword of the 1920s. For Lev Lunts, whose early death (in 1923) "saved him from compromises," as Victor Shklovsky wrote, and to a greater extent for Babel, the tensions between Jewish and Russian identity, between the roles of moralist and activist, were productive but anguished. Babel was full of admiration for the goals of the revolution, appalled (if fascinated) by the "exigencies of revolutionary action" (in Erlich's understatement). He created a narrative persona for his "Red Cavalry" stories that effectively conveys his moral revulsion at what he saw—and at what he himself was part of.

Many psychological and social factors contributed to each writer's ambivalence, but as members of the *intelligentsia* they suffered from what the remarkable literary scholar Lydia Ginzburg identified in herself as "the ineradicable trace of . . . self-abnegation." Fedin, Zoshchenko, and Erenburg at times valued their own sophistication and humanitarian scruples—and at times shrugged them off as superfluous, nineteenth-century ballast to be jettisoned as quickly as possible. Olesha put it plainly, if in an excess of self-loathing: "I want to reeducate myself. Of course, it is repulsive, extremely repulsive, to be an *intelligent*. . . ."

As Soviet culture was constricted into the narrow channel of Socialist Realism, which occurred long before the doctrine was officially promulgated at the Writers' Union Conference of 1934, modernism was doomed in Russia. What were preferences in the early Bolshevik years—the utilitarian role of art, its mimetic function—became, by the late 1920s, rigid prescriptions. Platonov, virtually the only writer of stature who was a proletarian by background, became a target no less than his *intelligent* colleagues. By 1931 his mockery of the bureaucratic quicksand that was choking the ideals he had fought for drew a fairly typical splash of official vitriol: "Self-criticism," said one of the worst watchdogs, "has nothing in common with freedom of speech for the kulak, for the Menshevik. . . . Those who wish to be Soviet writers must realize that nihilistic debauchery and anarchical individualistic posturing are no less alien to the proletarian revolution than open counter-revolution with fascist slogans."

By then neither revolutionary ardor nor artistic innovation was acceptable. Experimentation—the *sine qua non* of modernism—was outlawed as "formalism." Choices were limited: capitulation, arrest, silence. Of all the writers Erlich discusses who lived into the thirties, only Zamyatin—who received Stalin's permission to emigrate in 1931—retained both his health and his principles.

Erlich is emphatic about the importance of humanist and liberal values. He is very sympathetic toward Viktor Shklovsky, for instance, a brilliant writer and Formalist critic who relinquished his anguished attempts to preserve a measure of intellectual autonomy as the twenties gave way to the grisly thirties. Yet Erlich also defines with precision the flaw in Shklovsky and not in Shklovsky alone: ". . .what is at issue here is not lack of courage, failure of nerve, or political opportunism. It is rather a lack of internalized values—of a strong conviction that the values to which one is 'subjectively' drawn are 'objectively' worth defending and capable of survival." Although Erlich understands Mayakovsky's ardent embrace of Bolshevism, and

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admires—with qualifications—Babel's techniques of displacing horror, his affinity is for those, like Zamyatin, who were not afraid to assert "the basic tenets of civilized existence": kindness, compassion, regard for human life, pride in human achievement.

In his too-brief but valuable conclusion, Erlich reconciles two seemingly incompatible interpretations of the relationship between the modernist disposition and the totalitarian state. Julia Kristeva suggests that the "rhythm of death and the future" championed by the Modernists, especially by the Formalists, was inherently resistant to the politicization of art. Perceived therefore as dangerous by the state, it was purged. Czeslaw Milosz, in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, took the opposite view. He linked self-referential theories of literature with the growth of the totalitarian state: because autonomous artistic systems, however innovative in form, are contained within themselves, they pose no danger to the state, and can easily be tolerated. Erlich recognizes a measure of truth in each position. The Modernist spirit, with its love of irony and parody, its taste for complexity and its commitment to experimentation, was generally subversive of Soviet Socialist Realism. At the same time the Formalist orientation toward artifice, invention, and self-referentiality could be and sometimes was a way of evading the moral and political issues of daily life.

Victor Erlich is a superb guide through the maze of a bewildering epoch. Appropriately, his book ends in the early 1930s, when the thread ran out. □

Dennis Wrong

CONSCIENCE AND CULTURE

THE MORAL SENSE, by James Q. Wilson. The Free Press, 1993. 313 pp. $22.95.

James Wilson contends that there is a universally human moral sense that makes possible the existence of stable human societies. He divides his moral sense into four parts: sympathy, fairness, self-control, and duty. Wilson thinks that many prevailing doctrines in and around the social sciences deny the existence of such a sense, most notably the cultural relativism propounded by anthropologists and postmodernist philosophers, but also Freudianism, behaviorism, and the egoistic utilitarianism favored by economists. He therefore seeks to ground his moral sense in nature itself, specifically in human biology. Yet most sociologists, including this writer, would find little that is questionable in Wilson's general conception, although they would probably attribute his moral sense to the socialization process that creates human beings out of unformed biological organisms. They would equate sympathy with the formation of emotional bonds sensitizing individuals to "the role of the other," fairness with a universal "norm of reciprocity," and self-control and duty with the general "internalization of social norms."

Wilson, however, repeatedly insists that the moral sense is "natural," "inborn," "inherited," "innate," or "instinctive," and is the product of Darwinian natural selection. Mother-child bonding is especially important, for without it children would be neglected and die, terminating the species. Wilson does not regard all aspects of the moral sense as genetically based: he is not prepared to argue that there is a "sympathy gene," merely "some heritable disposition that helps us explain why sympathy is so common, as a norm if not a motive, among humans." Such a heritable disposition is in his view partly a matter of neurochemicals in the brain, partly a matter of psychic mechanisms such as the infantile tendency to imitate, which both reflects and presupposes an innate emotional attachment to the mother.

Wilson's argument for the necessity of a moral sense is cognate with my own in *The Problem of Order: What Unites and Divides Society*. We both believe that there is a common human nature underlying cultural and historical variation and that this nature includes sympathetic identification with others that restrains violence against them and the ruthless pursuit of self-interest at their expense. We draw on some of the same specific evidence: infantile dependency and social bonding, Stan-

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ley Milgram's famous experiments on obedience to authority, Edward Banfield's account of what he called "amoral familism" in Southern Italy, social-psychological research indicating that individuals alone rather than in groups are more likely to intervene to prevent crimes, psychiatric descriptions of psychopathic or sociopathic personalities who lack the capacity to sympathize with others or to feel remorse after harming them.

I differ with Wilson on a number of more general issues. He thinks that Freud and psychoanalysis have undermined belief in a moral sense by criticizing excessive instinctual repression, while I think that they offer the most credible explanation of why human beings possess a moral sense and how they acquire it. We also disagree on cultural relativism, his primary culprit for the allegedly widespread denial of a moral sense. He criticizes Clifford Geertz for maintaining that "there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture." Wilson seems to think that this statement denies the existence of cultural universals, equating "culture" exclusively with the particulars distinguishing one society or group from another. He nevertheless observes (in a footnote) that Geertz "acknowledges" human universals, claiming simply that the notion of a person who embodied only those would amount to a "cartoon." My view, too.

Four related but distinct questions are at issue in the relativism debate. First, is there a common human nature cutting across or underlying cultural diversity? Second, assuming such a nature, does it include a moral component resembling Freud's "superego" or Wilson's "moral sense"? Third, assuming such a component, what combination of nature and nurture, biology and culture, produces it? Fourth, does such a component provide a cross-cultural standard for evaluating cultures that rules out relativism? Wilson devotes most attention to the third question, seeking biological roots for the moral sense he postulates. His effort to ground morality in biology is clearly animated by the desire to find a pan-human standard that will invalidate relativism.

Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* is often regarded as the *locus classicus* of cultural relativism and is even blamed for the excesses of contemporary multiculturalism. Wilson, with characteristic fairness, credits Benedict with wishing primarily to reject racism and ethnocentrism, the rigid moral condemnation of another culture by the values of one's own. However, he joins Allan Bloom in *The Closing of the American Mind* in deploring the perversion of cultural relativism into a nihilism that rules out any moral judgments at all. Bloom complained that his students refused to condemn the Hindu practice of suttee, the burning of widows on their husband's funeral pyres, which was suppressed by the British. Wilson is shocked that his students reserved judgment about Nazi genocide. "What worried me," he explains, "was not that the students were prepared to accept some excuses, but that they began their moral reasoning on the subject by searching for excuses." The notion of cultural relativism, to be sure, was used in questionable ways from the very beginning: I remember arguing in 1947 with a fellow student who reproached me for denying to the Soviet Union the culturally relativist tolerance I was willing to extend to the Trobriand Islanders and the Samoans. (I asked him if it should apply to the Nazis as well—he said that was an altogether different matter.)

Critics were quick to note that Benedict obviously preferred the peaceful and cooperative Zuni to the two other cultures she described. In the context of her final chapter on psychology and culture, "that last disastrous sentence," as Clifford Geertz describes it, in which she refers to "equally valid patterns of life" can be understood as meaning equally genuine representations of the varieties of human nature rather than that all patterns are equally acceptable morally. Cannibalism, human sacrifice, and slavery are, after all, patterns of culture just as much as the nuclear family, humanitarianism, and democracy. The thrust of Benedict's formulation was directed against moral judgment of the behavior of *individuals* who were merely conforming to the norms of their culture. Benedict was primarily concerned to oppose the narrow, puritanical moralism of Christian missionaries and, often

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enough, colonial officials by calling attention both to the fact of cultural diversity and to the inescapable shaping of individuals by the dictates of their cultures. An individual cannibal cannot be expected to know any better, but refusal to judge him or her in no way precludes condemnation of cannibal*ism* as an undesirable cultural pattern. Such a version of "love the sinner, hate the sin" is altogether defensible.

Wilson wants to conclude from the existence of a universal moral sense validated by science that there is a transcultural standard of moral judgment. It is, to be sure, a highly general one: he does not argue that the moral sense dictates the content or scope of ordinary moral propositions. Much to Wilson's credit, he is always careful to note qualifications and possible criticisms of his own tentative generalizations. Conservative publicists like George Will, however, who have used him as ammunition in the "culture wars," have not been so circumspect.

I also have doubts about Wilson's argument against reinforcement theories of learning—his assertion that "children [naturally] imitate what they see others doing." Early in this century, the philosopher and social psychologist George Herbert Mead insisted that language, with its duality of reference to self and other, made possible much of the acquisition of common habits that psychologists were prone to attribute to inborn psychic mechanisms such as "an instinct to imitate," "suggestibility," or even "sympathy." Wilson avoids much reference to language, the most distinctively and universally human capacity of all, presumably out of a desire not to conceive of his moral sense as language-dependent. Yet, although the prelingual child may lack any innate tendency to imitate, he/she will learn language even if eventually growing up to be a psychopath totally bereft of any moral sense. The question of whether or not there is an innate disposition to acquire language is, of course, central to the controversies over Noam Chomsky's linguistic theories.

Perhaps the possible analogy between language and morality accounts for Wilson's scant references to the former. For obviously, even if there is an innate "deep structure" of "generative grammar," as Chomsky believes, it in no way predisposes humans to speak any particular language. Similarly, Wilson's moral sense tells us little about particular moral issues or even about the range of others it embraces: is it confined to the family as in Banfield's "amoral familism," or does it stop at the boundaries of the tribe, or does it at least adumbrate the brotherhood of man? Wilson tries rather unconvincingly to argue for a biological bond binding mother to child as well as the reverse, but this does not take us very far. He suggests that natural selection would have eliminated peoples who practiced drastic child neglect or all-out Hobbesian war of all against all, but population genetics is not necessary to produce this result: such cultural practices would have made survival improbable whether genetically based or not, and, of course, we would not know of the existence of past societies that had engaged in them precisely because they would not have survived. In fact, several societies in the historical and ethnographic record have institutionalized practices threatening and in a few cases ending their survival.

It is hard to see why Wilson's quest for a biological basis for morality is necessary to the claim that most human beings possess a definable moral sense. Moreover, since his moral sense consists of sentiments and impulses rather than definite rules of conduct, it does not go very far toward providing a transcultural standard for moral judgment—beyond suggesting that human beings should be nice to one another, especially to infants and children, and should cooperate on important projects. At a few points, Wilson seems to suggest that the nuclear family, private property, and prevention of addiction to substances that lessen self-control are desirable, which at least echoes conservative themes in current debates. But he does not go very far in this direction. Wilson's eminence as a social scientist—much greater than that of the quirky and cantankerous Allan Bloom—accounts more for his being taken up by conservative publicists than the direct bearing of anything he

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says on the "traditional values" extolled by contemporary conservatives.

Although Wilson is hardly a dogmatic hereditarian, many (though not all) conservatives have in the present century favored nature over nurture, biological over cultural determinism. Wilson wants to refute the suggestion that, in his words, "if culture is everything, then nature is nothing" by stressing the contribution of biological nature to socialized or acculturated human nature. There are indeed cultural universals that have been partially shaped by biological universals, just as cultural particulars necessarily depend on potentialities within the broad limits set by biological universals. The capacity to create and acquire culture itself rests on biological endowments common to the species. Attachment and affiliation to others undeniably is rooted in the helplessness and dependency of the infant, a condition peculiar to the human species that biologically resembles "infantilized" or "fetalized" apes in Géza Roheim's suggestive formulation. Why is more than that needed to affirm the existence of Wilson's moral sense?

Many of Wilson's arguments for a moral sense resemble those that liberal sociologists commonly advance against the recent revival of economistic cost-benefit or "rational choice" models in the social sciences. Yet sociologists would instantly shy away from Wilson's case for "natural sociability" as the foundation of morality and social order. Wilson recognizes that many factors, including both other innate dispositions, external circumstances, even the putatively baneful influence of theories like cultural relativism, can override the moral sense in determining individual conduct. His efforts to ground a universal moral sense in biology and natural selection are not as consequential as he thinks. □

COMING UP IN *DISSENT*

Gerald Early on Ralph Ellison
George Fredrickson on Eugene Genovese
Alan Ryan on Russell Jacoby
Christine Stansell on Katha Pollitt

Will Kymlicka

MISUNDERSTANDING NATIONALISM

NATIONALISM: FIVE ROADS TO MODERNITY, by Liah Greenfeld. Harvard University Press, 1992. 581 pp. $44.95, cloth; $19.95, paper.

BLOOD AND BELONGING: JOURNEYS INTO THE NEW NATIONALISM, by Michael Ignatieff. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993. 263 pp. $21.00, cloth.

THE WRATH OF NATIONS: CIVILIZATION AND THE FURIES OF NATIONALISM, by William Pfaff. Simon and Schuster, 1993. 256 pp. $22.00, cloth; $12.00, paper.

LIBERAL NATIONALISM, by Yael Tamir. Princeton University Press, 1993. 194 pp. $24.95, cloth.

A striking fact of twentieth-century history is the tenacity with which ethno-national groups have maintained their distinct identity, institutions, and desire for self-government. There are few examples in this century of national minorities—that is, national groups who share a state with larger national groups—voluntarily assimilating into the larger society.

North Americans often overlook this fact, because they fail to distinguish immigrants from national minorities. Immigrants choose to leave their original culture and homeland and move to a new country. They know that this uprooting will only be successful if they adapt to their new country, including learning its language and customs.

Immigrant groups rarely give rise to nationalist movements. They do not think of themselves as separate nations alongside the mainstream society and do not seek to establish their own autonomous homelands and self-governing political institutions.

This is true even of proponents of a more "multicultural" America, since they are primarily demanding greater accommodation of ethnic identity *within* mainstream institutions. These demands are evidence not of growing nationalism, although some paranoid critics have suggested this, but of a new, more pluralistic conception of integration within the American nation.

An immigrant group will adopt a nationalist agenda only if it is prevented from integrating into the mainstream society, through mandatory segregation and legal discrimination. So na-

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tionalism will not arise if immigrant groups are guaranteed equal civil and political rights.

But that is not true of non-immigrant minorities—groups whose historic homeland has been incorporated into a larger state, through colonization, conquest, or voluntary federation. These are the sorts of groups giving rise to nationalist conflict in Europe. They are rarely satisfied with individual civil and political rights. They want self-government, either through regional autonomy or complete secession.

The inadequacy of the immigrant model for national minorities is clear even in North America. The Québécois, Indian tribes, Puerto Ricans, and native Hawaiians have all fought for (and gained) some measure of self-government and local autonomy. Groups that are incorporated into a larger state not because they left their homeland and moved there, but because their homeland was conquered or annexed, often develop a distinct national consciousness, even though they may be free to assimilate.

In short, although there are virtually no cases of immigrants becoming nationalists, there are also few recent cases of national minorities accepting assimilation. If we focus on territorial nations rather than immigrants we can see that nationalism has been a constant factor of twentieth-century history.

Yet nationalism remains poorly understood, and Western leaders have been continually caught off guard by nationalist movements abroad, or indeed within their borders. For this reason, the appearance of these four books is welcome. Unfortunately, much of what they offer on nationalism obscures as much as it reveals.

This is particularly true of Michael Ignatieff's *Blood and Belonging* and William Pfaff's *The Wrath of Nations*. At the heart of both books is the distinction between "ethnic" and "civic" nationalism. "Ethnic" nations, like Germany, define membership in terms of shared descent, so that people of a different racial or ethnic group (for example, Turkish guest-workers in Germany) cannot acquire citizenship no matter how long they live in the country. "Civic" nations, like the United States, are in principle open to anyone who lives in the territory. Ethnic nationalism is exclusive, civic nationalism is inclusive. Both Ignatieff and Pfaff argue that only civic nationalism is compatible with liberalism, democracy, and peace.

This is a familiar distinction, but Ignatieff and Pfaff badly misinterpret it. For example, Ignatieff equates "ethnic" nationalism with "cultural" nationalism. Cultural nationalism defines the nation in terms of a common culture, and the aim of the nationalist movement is to protect the survival of that culture. Examples of cultural nationalism include the Québécois or the Flemish in Belgium. Ignatieff calls these "ethnic" nationalisms. But that is clearly wrong. Both the Québécois and the Flemish accept immigrants as full members of the nation, so long as they learn the language and history of the society. They define membership in terms of participation in a common culture, open to all, rather than on ethnic grounds. The shift from an ethnic to a cultural conception of the nation in these cases has been a slow and painful one, but it is now firmly entrenched in citizenship laws and public opinion.

Pfaff and Ignatieff also overlook the fact that "civic" nationalism has a cultural component. They say that membership in a civic nation is based, not on descent or culture, but on allegiance to the political principles of democracy and freedom. This is obviously false of native-born Americans, whose citizenship has nothing to do with their political beliefs. They automatically acquire citizenship by descent, and cannot be stripped of it if they turn out to be fundamentalists or fascists. And it is only half-true of immigrants. The American government does require immigrants to swear allegiance to the Constitution, but it also requires them to learn the English language and American history. These legal requirements of gaining citizenship are intended to integrate immigrants into the common culture.

Membership in the American nation, just as in the Québecois nation, involves participation in a common culture. It is a legal requirement for children to learn the English language and American history in schools, and all levels of

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American government have insisted that there is a legitimate governmental interest in promoting a common language.

This is not necessarily wrong or oppressive. After all, the common culture that American immigrants must integrate into is capacious, leaving ample room for the expression of a particular ethnic or religious identity. And learning a common language and shared history helps ensure that immigrants are not disadvantaged in the mainstream economy or polity.

The point is that both ethnic and civic nationalisms have a cultural component. Of course, the way culture is interpreted varies from nation to nation. Some nations define their culture in ethnic and religious terms, others do not. These variations are crucial to understanding why some nationalisms are peaceful, liberal, and democratic, while others are xenophobic, authoritarian, and expansionist. Unfortunately, since Pfaff and Ignatieff downplay the cultural component of nationalism, they shed no light on the variations in how culture is interpreted.

For the same reason, they provide no real explanation of why people value their national identity. Pfaff says that national identity reflects a "primordial" desire for "community." But even if people have such a primordial desire, why does this take the form of a bond to their *national* community, rather than their church, city, or workplace? Pfaff offers no explanation of this.

Ignatieff explains the affirmation of national identity in Eastern Europe as a response to the power vacuum created by the collapse of communism. But that puts the cart before the horse, since nationalist movements predated, and helped cause, the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union. To be sure, the disintegration of the state made violence more likely, by leaving groups at each other's mercy. But the feeling of national identity underlying those groups preceded the collapse of communism.

The weakness of their explanations for the tenacity of national identity should not be surprising. Pfaff and Ignatieff treat nationalism as a matter of either political principle (civic nationalism) or ethnic descent (ethnic nationalism). But insofar as both civic and ethnic nationalisms are cultural phenomena, any plausible account of national identity must examine people's attachment to their culture, which Pfaff and Ignatieff largely ignore.

Similarly, both misinterpret the nature of nationalist conflict. They argue that ethnic nationalism is the cause of nationalist conflict, because of its ethnic exclusiveness. In fact, nationalist conflict is often caused by attempts by civic nationalists to forcibly incorporate national minorities. Consider the Kurds. The problem is not that Turkey refuses to accept Kurds as Turkish citizens. The problem is precisely its attempt to force Kurds to see themselves as Turks. Turkey refuses to accept that Kurds are a separate national group (the government calls them "mountain Turks"), and until 1990 banned the use of the Kurdish language in an attempt to coercively assimilate the Kurds. The violence in Kurdistan—one of the longest-running nationalist conflicts in the world—is not ethnic exclusion, but the forcible inclusion of a national minority into a larger national group.

The same process has occurred in America. The American government forcibly incorporated Indian tribes, native Hawaiians, and Puerto Ricans into the American state, and then attempted to coercively assimilate each group into the common American culture. It banned the speaking of Indian languages in school and forced Puerto Rican and Hawaiian schools to use English rather than Spanish or Hawaiian. The explicit aim was to make these groups see themselves as members of the American nation, not as members of a separate and self-governing nation. These groups resisted (often violently) the assimilationist policies, and today a measure of self-government is granted to each group.

It's essential to see that this aggressive expansionism was quite consistent with civic nationalism. After all, the aim was to turn Indians and native Hawaiians into American citizens, with the same rights as other American citizens. Civic nationalism in the United States has historically justified the conquering and colonizing of national minorities and the

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coercive imposition of English-language courts and schools.

Much of the nationalist conflict around the world is the result of attempts by majority nations to coercively assimilate national minorities. This aggression is often rationalized precisely on the grounds that the majority nation is nonethnic. Since Indians will be treated as equal citizens of the American nation, just as Kurds will be equal citizens of the Turkish nation, what harm is done by abolishing their separate institutions and forcing them to join the larger nation?

The motivation of Québecois, Latvian, Flemish, Kurdish, or Slovak nationalists is not a fear of being excluded from a larger nation on ethnic grounds, but a desire to maintain themselves as separate nations. To treat ethnic exclusiveness as the sole, or even main, source of nationalist conflict is a striking mistake.

Ignatieff also misinterprets the relation between nationalism and democracy. He claims that civic nationalism is "necessarily democratic, since it vests sovereignty in all of the people." But consider virtually any country in Latin America. Most of these countries have a strong sense of national identity that is nonethnic. Peru and Brazil, for example, are extraordinarily multiethnic societies, granting equal citizenship to whites, blacks, Indians, and Asians. Yet there is nothing "necessarily democratic" about them. Civic nations can be military dictatorships as easily as liberal democracies.

Pfaff and Ignatieff are right to insist on the distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism. However, virtually every claim they make about this distinction—and its relationship to culture, violence, and democracy—is overstated. They present themselves as having seen through the myths of nationalism, but they propagate their own mythical conception of civic nationalism as inherently good, peaceful, and democratic.

Each book has some redeeming features. Pfaff has some interesting things to say about the deleterious impact of nationalist ideas in Asia and Africa. Ignatieff's book includes an account of his journeys to Yugoslavia, Kurdistan, Ukraine, Québec, Germany, and Ulster, and his talks with the people affected, from workers and students to nationalist rebels and government ministers. He is a good interviewer, and their stories are often compelling. The book was written to accompany a BBC series of the same name, broadcast on PBS last year, which is worth watching. But although the interviews are interesting, Ignatieff's analysis of the events or feelings he encounters is seriously flawed.

These books do tell us something about the psychology of cosmopolitan liberals at the end of the twentieth century. Pfaff is an expatriate American columnist for the *International Herald Tribune* living in France; Ignatieff an expatriate Canadian living in England. They are multilingual citizens of the world whose ambitions took them beyond their countries' borders, and for whom borders are largely irrelevant. Confronted by nationalists who care deeply about borders, and indeed who often wish to redraw them so as to create smaller political units, many cosmopolitan liberals feel threatened and confused. Moreover, unlike liberals in the nineteenth century or the 1950s, liberals today no longer are confident that history is on the side of cosmopolitanism. These books provide revealing examples of the sense of anxiety and confusion engulfing cosmopolitan liberals today. For an explanation of nationalism, however, readers must look elsewhere.

For the historical origins of nationalism, Liah Greenfeld's book is a useful starting point. According to Greenfeld, the national idea first arose among elites, rather than the middle or lower classes. Yet, she notes, this raises a puzzle, for nations are defined in terms of "the people"—the mass of population in a territory, including the members of different classes and occupations. Why would elites accept an ideal that viewed the people "as the bearer of sovereignty, the central object of loyalty, and the basis of collective solidarity"? Elites traditionally tried to dissociate themselves as much as possible from "the plebs" or "the rabble." How then did they come to identify with the people?

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Some recent theorists have argued that "nation-building" was a functional requirement of modernization. Modern economies required a literate, educated work force, which in turn required integrating the lower classes into a common culture, through standardized public education. However, Greenfeld insists that the national idea arose before modernization, in response to more contingent factors. She argues that it first arose in England in the early sixteenth century, adopted by Henry VIII to support his battle with Rome and then by Parliament in its battle with James I. Similarly, she argues, the emergence of nationalism in France, Russia, Germany, and the United States all predated industrialization. In each case, the idea of "the nation" served the interests of a particular elite group—such as the French and Russian nobility in their battle with absolutist monarchs, or the German intellectuals in their desire for social acceptance.

Greenfeld tracks the rise of the word "nation" and its correlates ("people," "country") with meticulous care, showing when they came into usage in each country, by whom, for what purposes. The result is an impressive but also daunting work of scholarship. I suspect that only specialists will want to wade through the twenty pages detailing the various orders of the French aristocracy or the nine-page synopsis of an obscure work by the German Romantic Carl Moritz.

Greenfeld reminds us of the contingent origins of nations, but she doesn't explain their tenacious persistence. Her narrative ends at the beginning of the nineteenth century, by which time national ideals had been entrenched in the five countries she examines. She does not address how these national ideals became diffused to the masses or why national minorities have held on to their identity, despite powerful economic and political incentives to join larger nations.

This is not a criticism of her book, which succeeds admirably in the task it sets. Greenfeld is addressing the question of why feudal elites abandoned their traditional prenational identity for a national identity. She is not addressing the modern-day question of how to understand conflict between two or more groups whose national identities are already firmly rooted.

Greenfeld does touch on this issue at the end of her book. She argues that national identity has remained strong in the modern era because its emphasis on the importance of "the people" provides a source of dignity to all individuals, whatever their class. But (as she admits), this doesn't explain why any *particular* national identity is important, or why people aren't willing to abandon their original identity for another national identity that also would guarantee them dignity. Why shouldn't the Kurds be happy to be members of the Turkish nation?

To understand this, we need a clearer account of why national identity matters to people. The great virtue of Yael Tamir's book—one of the few full-length philosophical discussions of nationalism—is that she tackles this question head on. Tamir is an Israeli philosopher, and the book reflects her attempt to reconcile Zionist convictions with the liberal belief in individual rights and personal autonomy.

Tamir begins by noting that nations—civic or ethnic—are cultures that provide their members with meaningful ways of life across the full spectrum of human activity (economic, political, educational, recreational, religious, and so on). Following Anthony Smith, we can call these "organizational cultures," to signify that they form institutionally integrated societies, not simply lifestyle subgroups or advocacy movements within a society.

The value of national identity, then, is tied to the value of cultural membership. Why is cultural membership important? Tamir starts from the liberal assumption that people are capable of making autonomous choices about their aims in life. But the ability to make these choices depends on "the presence of a cultural context," so that individual liberty is dependent on membership in a cultural community. Over time, individuals can put these cultural contexts themselves in question and choose which culture they wish to live in.

Being able to express one's cultural identity is important for many reasons. Cultural membership is a precondition of autonomous moral

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choices. Actions performed in a cultural context are "endowed with additional meaning" because they can be seen both as acts of individual achievement and as contributions to the development of one's culture; and shared membership in a culture promotes a sense of belonging and relationships of mutual recognition.

This is a sensible account of the value of national identity, similar to the view of many nineteenth-century liberals. Tamir then argues that expressing one's cultural identity requires some degree of "national self-determination." Since Tamir defines nations as the bearers of distinct cultures, she construes the right to national self-determination as the right to ensure the continued existence and development of that distinct culture. This, she argues, does not require that each nation have its own sovereign "nation-state," which is in any event impossible. Instead, the right to develop one's national culture can be ensured by autonomy within multination states, through mechanisms such as federalism or consociational democracy.

The exact form of self-determination, she argues, is not important. What matters is that the culture have some "public expression." Without this public component, the existence of a nation as a distinct social unit would be jeopardized. Hence the state should serve an "expressive" role, actively reflecting a particular national identity in its symbols and institutions.

Tamir's defense of nationalist politics rests heavily on this claim regarding the need for the "public expression" of a culture. But her argument is not very clear. Why isn't freedom of speech and association sufficient to allow people to express their cultural identity? Why is the state needed for people to "share a language, memorize their past, cherish their heroes, live a fulfilling national life"? If people can collectively express their religious identity through freedom of association while still maintaining a strict separation of church and state, why shouldn't we maintain a separation of state and nation?

In places, Tamir implies that state involvement is simply unavoidable. She rightly argues that the state cannot avoid expressing a cultural identity when it adopts official languages and public holidays. On this view, state expression of a national identity is more regrettable than desirable, but since it is unavoidable, justice requires that we compensate national minorities for disadvantages this creates, and protect them from pressures to assimilate.

Yet at other times, Tamir implies that it is a positive good that states express a national identity, and that existing liberal democracies should do more to develop the "cultural essence of the state." She says that the "yearning for self-determination" is to see political institutions as "carriers of the national identity." On this view, political arrangements "should reflect the unique character and draw on the history, the culture, the language, and at times the religion of the national group, thereby enabling its members to regard it as their own." The argument here is not about the survival of the culture, but about the desire for political affirmation of self-identity and the desire to have a sense of ownership of government through one's nation.

Tamir's last chapter is entitled "Making A Virtue Out of Necessity," which captures the two strands in her thought. But it is unclear why liberals should see the political expression of national identity as a virtue to be promoted. In most nationalist conflicts over devolution of powers, boundaries, political representation, language rights, and so on, the ambitions of nationalists far exceed what is required to ensure the continued existence of the nation as a distinct society. Yet they all increase the public expression of the national culture and promote national identification with the state. Tamir's theory provides no way to resolve these conflicts, in part because she provides no clear basis for judging whether nationalist politics are a necessity to be minimized or a virtue to be promoted.

In my view, it is a mistake to make a virtue out of necessity. The boundaries of state and nation rarely if ever coincide perfectly, so viewing the state as the possession of a particular national group can only alienate

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postmodern icons explained
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minority groups. The state must be seen as equally belonging to all people who are governed by it, regardless of their nationality.

But it would be an even more serious mistake to ignore the ways in which states necessarily privilege particular national cultures. This is obvious in decisions regarding the language of schools, courts and government services. Given the centrality of the state to modern life, a group without such language rights will face enormous pressures to assimilate. Decisions regarding immigration and naturalization also affect the viability of national cultures. Immigration can strengthen a national group, so long as the numbers are regulated and immigrants are encouraged (or required) to learn the nation's language and history. But if immigrants in a multination state integrate into the majority culture, then national minorities will be increasingly outnumbered and so increasingly powerless in political life. Moreover, states often encourage immigrants (or migrants from other parts of the country) to settle in lands traditionally held by national minorities, reducing them to a minority even within their historic territory. (Consider the fate of Indian tribes and Chicanos in the American southwest.) Decisions about public holidays and school curricula also typically reflect and help perpetuate a particular national culture.

In short, there are many ways that government decisions play a crucial role in sustaining

Recent and Forthcoming Books by *Dissent* Editors

Paul Berman, ed., *Blacks and Jews: Alliances and Arguments*, Delacorte, 1994.

Mitchell Cohen, *The Wager of Lucien Goldmann: Tragedy, Dialectics, and the Hidden God*, Princeton University Press, 1994.

Lewis A. Coser, ed., *On Work, Race, and the Sociological Imagination*, by Everett C. Hughes, the University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Robert Heilbroner, *Visions of the Future: The Distant Past, Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow*, Oxford University Press, 1995.

Nicolaus Mills, ed., *Arguing Immigration: The Debate Over the Changing Face of America*, Simon and Schuster, 1994.

Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad*, University of Notre Dame Press, 1994.

Sean Wilentz and Paul E. Johnson, *The Kingdom of Matthias*, Oxford University Press, 1994.

Dennis Wrong, *Power: Its Forms, Bases, and Uses* (third edition), Transaction Publishers, 1995.

Dennis Wrong, *The Problem of Order: What Unites and Divides Society*, Free Press, 1994.

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national cultures. If a national group has full language rights and control over immigration, education, and resource development policy, then its long-term viability is secured. If it lacks these rights and powers, its long-term viability is in grave jeopardy. So if national minorities do not wish to assimilate, they must struggle to gain those rights and powers, either through secession or regional autonomy. Since national majorities have historically been very reluctant to accept the demands of national minorities, the result is long-standing national divisions, sometimes flaring into violence.

This is true even in states that consciously avoid an "expressive" role. Tamir would like states to be more explicit about affirming a national identity—for example, entrenching an official language in their constitution. But even in a country like the United States, which avoids this symbolic trapping of nationalism, the problem for national minorities remains. What matters are not symbols, but the facts on the ground—whether a national minority has sufficient control over decisions regarding language, education, immigration, and economic development to ensure its long-term viability.

The failure of liberalism to understand nationalism is directly related to its failure to acknowledge these unavoidable connections between state and culture. The myth that the state can simply be based on democratic principles, without supporting a particular national identity or culture, has made it impossible to see why national minorities are so keen on forming or maintaining political units in which they are a majority. Indeed, as Ernest Gellner noted, once we recognize the inevitable links between state and culture, the question is not so much why nationalist movements arise, but why there aren't more of them. □

Queries

For a study of the persistence and change of political attitudes and commitments I would like to hear from people who at any time in their lives sympathized with either the Soviet Union, Mao's China, Castro's Cuba, Vietnam, Sandinista Nicaragua, or other similar systems.

I am interested in both the sources of the original attraction these systems exercised and the reassessments of such attitudes in more recent years.

When writing please note where you saw the notice about the study. For further informatin, contact Prof. Paul Hollander, Dept. of Sociology, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA 01003.

Seeking photographs or film/video footage of *Irving Howe* for PBS documentary on his life, including lectures he gave, symposiums he attended, awards he received, or home movies of him. We will pay a fee for any material used. Please contact Emily Shapiro at Riverside Film Productions, 132 W. 21st Street, NY, NY, 10011, Tel. 212-242-3005.

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Asking Relevant Questions

Editors:

It is with utmost difficulty that I overcome the more primitive impulses aroused by the sheer—even if unintended—effrontery of Eugene D. Genovese's article "The Question," (*Dissent*, Summer 1994) and concede to a more coldly cerebral judgment that tells me that a sense of civility, even if at its most minimal level, requires me to express my appreciation for his having submitted it for publication in *Dissent*. Better this than nothing!

The same cerebral judgment and sense of civility do not induce me to thank *Dissent*'s editors for exploiting the unsolicited arrival of Genovese's article to finally publish something in the area of post-Soviet investigations on the nature of Stalinism and/or communism—in my opinion, the salient historical phenomenon of the twentieth century. (I *have* taken note of the several relevant articles by two board members since the downfall of Soviet power, whose work only serves to highlight, one by cursoriness and the other by singularity, *Dissent*'s failure to comprehend the prime importance of this subject matter.)

To express appreciation to Genovese, however, is rather awkward, since it is very much like thanking a reckless truck driver for crashing through the storefront to make an unexpected delivery. In continuation of this (somewhat tortured) metaphor, his action *did* serve to awaken the proprietors to an interest in his unordered merchandise sufficient for them to create an impromptu display for the possible interest of customers and passersby, thereby showing promotional enterprise in a line of wares they had previously not stocked.

To Genovese, therefore, a grudging "Thank you!" And to *Dissent*'s editors a question: "Is this what it takes to get you to target what is most relevant?"

But now that the editors have launched the discussion—which they title "The Crimes of Communism" and Genovese titles "The Question"—why complain?

Because the editors have blundered into a discussion of preeminent importance to the future of the democratic left on the basis of Genovese's hopelessly tangled conceptualizations. The consequences can already be seen in the fractionated responses of those chosen to rebut him, each selected to speak for one of the various professions, political tendencies, or ideologies subjected to attack in his article. Their comments, contesting Genovese's distorted database and flawed logic, unavoidably conform to Genovese's agenda of what is relevant and to his order of priorities. (I hazard to predict that succeeding comments in *Dissent* on the Genovese article will follow the same pattern.)

What makes this subject matter preeminent? Because comprehending the nature of Stalinism/communism as historical phenomena is essential to defining socialism and capitalism for the twenty-first century. It encompasses such basic issues as the state and civil society, the moral and ethical basis for regulations to assure environmental sustainability, how to increase social equality and expand political empowerment without curtailing freedom, and so on. These and related issues are at the root of contemporary politics in our country and in most other industrially advanced nations, marking the battle line between conservatives and liberals at home and between conservatives and social democrats abroad, with the right trumpeting the "fall of communism" as evidence that increased privatization, rather than a larger role for government, is now the order of the day.

A worse discussion format for defining and resolving these issues can hardly be conceived than that of Genovese's article. It is written as an expression of *his* problem, which is not *our* problem. (His article might have better use at colloquies of communists of recent date, whose political morals and ethics were shaped by the Stalinist value system and who, like Genovese, are now undergoing an agonizing readjustment that will prove to be far more complex than casting off old garments and donning new ones.) *Dissent*'s editorial board should, therefore, terminate the Genovese-bounded discussion in its pages by presenting its own format for a discussion of new insights into the historical nature and significance of Stalinism/communism and its present and future implications for the restructuring of society.

Even for Genovese's central purpose of assessing guilt for "The Crimes of Communism," not an insignificant matter, the very title of Genovese's article, "The Question," explicated as "What did you know and when did you know it," heralds its worthlessness by presenting it as a matter of who among the Communist party's adherents was an ignorant dupe and who was a knowing scoundrel and who was some of each, when, in truth, how much or little anyone knew hardly matters. What does matter is how much or how little they were willing to use Leninist and/or Stalinist ideology (they are not the same) to rationalize words or deeds as being morally and ethically acceptable. For "The Crimes of Communism" consist, principally, of defending the use of means that violate the norms of acceptable conduct in traditionally civilized communities—norms the perpetrators dismissed as "bourgeois" and the

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violation of which they justified as being in the service of "higher" ends.

What, then, is *our* problem—which requires *our* format for discussion, rather than Genovese's? It is that at the close of the twentieth century we are less able to give a clear answer to the question "What is socialism?"—and its concomitant, "How is it to be realized?" than at any time since the century's beginning. This despite our century's vast, earth-shaking experiences, in which the Russian revolution and its demise played the central, history-shaping role: no less so than the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century and the French revolution and its extended impact in the nineteenth century.

The effort to resolve our problem, therefore, should begin with a search to understand the meaning of the Russian revolution, beginning with a reexamination of the history of its intellectual framework (from Herzen to Yeltsin!) as internationalized by Soviet power to influence anticapitalist programs and movements throughout the world. Query #1: Was communism, in any way, socialist? And #2: Was Stalinism communist? (The reference literature for these purposes is much smaller than most would imagine, with Robert V. Daniels's *The End of the Communist Revolution* covering most of the ground, at least in outline.)

Dissent's forty years of publication, together with other writings of its editors and contributors, constitute an important repository for such an examination. But these reflect largely the polemical needs of those times, targeted mainly against the role of Stalinism, both within the Soviet Union and worldwide. *Dissent*'s immediate concerns made it counter-productive to inquire whether any—and which—aspects of Soviet society's seven-decade-long existence contained experiences that might be considered to be protosocialist and germane to answering our question of "What is socialism?" It was easier to dismiss everything Soviet as alien to our concept of the socialist future; though Irving Howe, with his characteristic intellectual honesty, admitted publicly that the Gorbachev phenomenon showed that Isaac Deutscher had been closer to the truth in this matter than had *Dissent* in its fierce polemics against him. (Much of this question relates to a deeper understanding of the social history of the Soviet Union, as found, for instance, in the work of Moshe Lewin).

Our rethinking "how to achieve socialism" must also, of necessity, concern itself with the record of the international communist movement—its ideology, its mores, its strategical and tactical concepts, in other words, the theories and practices that underlie the "Crimes of Communism." Nor is this a matter of *historical* critique only. Stalinism, and certainly "stalinism" (l.c.) remain very much alive, and will continue to play an important role in the twenty-first century.

This is not simply a matter of where Stalinism continues in state power—China, Cuba, North Korea, et al.—but where its ideology, however much diluted, persists within the left, largely because it is the only concept of "socialism" known to contemporary generations of leftists, as shown by Genovese's article and some of the commentary on it. This is above all true of Russia and most of the rest of the former Soviet bloc, as seen in the resurgence of former Communist parties and cadres, though de-Stalinized to various degrees, in Poland, Hungary, Lithuania, et al. And in our country, where everything on the left is minuscule, Stalinism and stalinism remain a proportionately significant presence.

Elimination of the vestiges of communist/Stalinist ideology from the American left, essential to its renewal and growth, is an enormous challenge to *Dissent*: more than it can carry off on its own. But it should strive to be the intellectual spearhead in this undertaking. Who else on the American scene has a comparable history of dissecting and combatting communism/Stalinism? *Dissent* can build on this tradition, welcoming all who agree to become part of it.

The invitation to join this enterprise cannot, however, be extended to those who have not yet rid themselves of the bag and baggage of their communist pasts. And above all, not to those who come on the basis of their recently revised and poorly rethought ideological formats, as per Genovese. Had *Dissent*'s editors rejected his article in order to continue ignoring the overall subject matter of which it is a part, its rejection would have been worse than its publication. Though its publication has got *Dissent* into this on the wrong foot, it does not preclude regaining balance and moving ahead to carry out the mission that should have become apparent to it several years ago with the fall of Soviet Communism.

Ernest Erber
Columbia, Maryland

Michael Walzer Replies:

Ernest Erber is certainly right to argue that when the editors accepted Genovese's "The Question," we were allowing him to frame the question, and he did so in a peculiarly personal way. He didn't open up a discussion of *why* so much of the left took the historical wrong turn represented by Soviet communism or *whether* or *how* it is possible to get back on track (or *if* the tracks are still there). But we will address these other questions in our own way, when they arise as real political questions—thus Tom Weisskopf on the prospects of market socialism in this issue. We are not prepared to sponsor a massive re-analysis and rewriting of Russian history in light of the communist collapse (there are some things, after all, that are better done in academic journals), though we would be happy to carry speculative pieces about how such a rewriting might turn out.

Anyway, Genovese's question opens readily into a larger one that *Dissent* has addressed in the past and will almost certainly have to address in the future: why have so many left intellectuals, and leftists generally, often fallen for one or another version of authoritarianism? It is not only a matter of the Stalinist regime and the gulags; the same process of enchantment and apology gets repeated again and again, writ large and small, in China, Vietnam, Cuba, Nicaragua. . . . And I have watched many leftish Americans these past months aching to believe in Subcommandante Marcos, knowing that they shouldn't,

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tantalized by that democratic sounding "sub." We still need to investigate the political psychology at work here. It is less important now to point the finger (we have been doing that for a long time) than to understand what it is we are pointing at. □

More on "The Question"

Editors:

Eugene Genovese and his critics ("The Question," *Dissent*, Summer 1994) leave me feeling altogether ancient. Genovese says he became a Communist at the age of fifteen in 1945, and Eric Foner says he first confronted Genovese's "Question" at the time of Khrushchev's famous speech in 1956. I became aware of The Question just after my sixteenth birthday, when the Soviet Union invaded Finland in late 1939. I had become interested in politics and defined myself as a socialist sympathetic to the Soviet Union a few months earlier, although the Stalin-Hitler pact had already given me pause. Undoubtedly, I had previously absorbed much from the ambience of the "progressive" school I had attended in Europe. My fellow students there included the sons of the president, the foreign minister, and the ambassador to Britain of the embattled Spanish republic then highly subject to Soviet influence, the future chief adviser on nuclear physics to the French Communist party, the niece of a famous German Communist novelist, the son of a leading journalist for the London *Daily Worker*, and several Americans from New York and Hollywood whose parents were affluent fellow-travelers. Sent to a conservative boarding school in Canada, I rebelled and embraced what I took to be the "values" of my previous school, earning a reputation as the school "Red." I went so far as to offer my services to the Canadian Communist party.

The twenty-two months of the Nazi-Soviet alliance were, however, an unpromising time to become a Communist sympathizer. I was doubtless lucky to have had to face The Question so early both in my own life and in the era during which it became a major issue, if not *the* major issue, for the Western left.

It is often forgotten that the *Nation*, the *New Republic*, and the *New Statesman*, all of which I shortly began to read, were anti-Stalinist during this period. They printed a number of challenges to remaining believers and apologists by former Communists not unlike Genovese's. So this is an old story, and Genovese's critics are right to insist that for a long time there have been many voices on the left condemning Soviet totalitarianism. My own impression is that few intellectuals have in recent decades been all-out supporters of the Soviet Union—I had not indeed thought of Genovese himself as one up to the "bitter end," as he now says he was. Christine Stansell has it exactly right in referring to the "tepid tolerance of the communist dictatorships . . . and distrust of anticommunism . . . as inherently right wing" that prevailed in "the strongholds of the American left." But these attitudes became especially dominant in the sixties with the rise of the New Left, the spread of "polycentrism" in the Communist world, and communist revolutions in the Third World, of which the Cuban was the most important. What was "new" about the New Left was its dissociation from either active support for or opposition to the Soviet Union, although it reiterated many of the arguments against the Cold War and American "imperialism" long favored by partisans of the Soviet Union. It also repeated with reference to Cuba, Maoist China, North Vietnam, and Nicaragua, though more shallowly and for a much shorter time, the illusions about communist revolutions that had first emerged in connection with the Soviet Union. Genovese is certainly on target in criticizing this disposition.

Opposition to the Cold War as distinct from identification with Communism; recoil from anti-Communism because the crudest and most visible anti-Communists were invariably on the right; commitment to the "noble ideals" of socialism still affirmed by the Communist states if violated in practice; the support given by the communist states to antiracist and anticolonial movements in the Third World—all of these considerations accounted for the anti–anti-Communism of the New Left.

Genovese speaks of "leftwingers who endlessly denounced Stalinism but who could be counted on to support—'critically,' of course—the essentials of our political line on the world and national affairs." He is referring here to a position that conservatives have attacked as "moral equivalence," and that Arthur Koestler long ago named "the fallacy of the false equation." Conservatives, however, regularly implied that this outlook involved branding Soviet and American societies as equally evil *in toto*, whereas it usually referred, at least since 1956, only to the alleged "mirror-imaging" strategies of the two superpowers in the Cold War.

As a "Cold War liberal," I have always rejected the sufficiency of such a view of Communism, believing that it was necessary to support a foreign policy that resisted Soviet (and Chinese) expansionism. Such support in no way entailed endorsement of anything and everything done by American governments in opposition to Communism. America made mistakes and engaged in morally questionable actions in the course of the Cold War, especially in relation to the Third World, the war in Vietnam being, of course, the most notable instance; actions in the Caribbean and Central America running a close second.

Even if there have been hardly any true apologists for Stalinism since at the latest Khrushchev's de-Stalinization speech, anti–anti-Communists remain open to the charge of moral blindness and lack of imagination. Undeniably, rejections of Communism by many on the left have had a "tepid" *pro forma* flavor when contrasted with their impassioned denunciations of *apartheid* in South Africa or right-wing dictatorships in Latin America. The very preference for the label "Stalinism" rather than "Communism" exemplifies such an attitude. The crimes of imperialists, capitalist exploiters, and traditional authoritarian regimes over the centuries hardly excuse such selective indignation, for the *raison d'être* of the left was to oppose injustice and oppression everywhere. For many of us

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comfortable academics fortunate enough to have had no direct experience of Communist tyranny and duplicity, what fueled our moral outrage over Communism was the discovery that people who flaunted their "social conscience" and displayed an overweening self-righteousness in judging others were defending a regime that had committed mass murders on an unprecedented scale. Such a stance seemed more morally culpable than the complacent or fatalistic acceptance of the status quo, warts and all, characteristic of the conservative majority in all times and places. As Leszek Kolakowski once noted, there has not been a single evil denounced by the left in the capitalist West that did not exist in vastly greater proportions in the Communist world. The revelations since 1989 of terrible environmental damage and nuclear accidents are the most recent cases in point, surprising and shocking even anti-Communists of long standing.

It may very well be the case that, as Foner accuses Genovese of believing, "human nature is immutable, hierarchy inevitable, equality impossible," but to acknowledge this does not, as Foner suggests, transform one into a cynical or acquiescent conservative denying any possible improvement in the human lot. Hierarchy, inequality, authority, and even the immutability of human nature are all matters of degree. To accept that they cannot be totally overcome still leaves a lot of room for their reduction. I take it that Genovese's strictures on "radical egalitarianism and participatory democracy" are directed against utopian belief in the ultimate abolition of all authority and elites, the institutionalization of complete equality of condition, and the universal reign of love and altruism in all human relations. The conviction that such an ideal social order can actually be achieved through political revolution is rightly seen as the source of the evils perpetrated or justified by the left since 1917, or 1789 for that matter. If many on the left have regarded the invocation of the ideals as at least a mitigating consideration in their judgment of the Communist world, it can be argued to the contrary that the commission of monstrous crimes in the name of ideals is morally even more discreditable than sinning out of manifestly evil or basely self-interested motives. One can recognize this without renouncing images of a Good Society as a guiding ideal: I recall one of our editors, Agnes Heller, observing at an editorial board meeting that "utopia should be a standard, not a goal." Irving Howe's last, alas, publication in *Dissent*, "Two Cheers for Utopia" in the Spring 1993 issue, was in this same spirit. Such a view is in no way inconsistent with Genovese's realism and in no way precludes continued efforts to advance traditional left ideals. I share Genovese's belief that "socialism is finished" but that the economy we are accustomed to call "capitalism" remains eminently reformable.

DENNIS WRONG
Princeton, N.J.

Editors:

Eugene Genovese's questions are a good start ("The Question," *Dissent*, Summer 1994), but his own answers are not only far from adequate but open up a whole series of new questions. One of the most important being, "Why did it take so long?"

He admits that the Soviet Union was the perpetrator of mass slaughter on a scale previously unmatched in all human history. Yet, although expelled from the Communist party in 1950, he "remained a supporter of the international movement and of the Soviet Union until there was nothing left to support." An extraordinary statement in view of the vast array of known Soviet transgressions (to which Genovese does not plead previous ignorance—on the contrary, he says "we knew everything essential and we knew it from the beginning").

Ever since the coup d'état by which the Communist party seized power in 1917 (overthrowing a potentially democratic regime) many well-publicized events revealed the true nature of Soviet communism. There was the end of liberalism with the abandonment of the New Economic Policy; the liquidation of the kulaks and the subsequent deliberate starvation in the Ukraine; the establishment of the gulags; the infamous Moscow treason trials; the execution of most of the "old Bolsheviks" who had led the 1917 coup; the incredible Soviet-Nazi pact, followed by the Soviet invasion of Poland and its partition with Germany; the invasion of Finland and of the Baltic states; the so-called "doctors' plot"; the invasion of Hungary in 1956 and the execution of Imre Nagy despite safe-conduct assurances; the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968; and many other events of the same portent but of lesser magnitude.

Genovese's essay reveals the real question—why did he and countless others maintain their faith in the face of such known brutalities, and why did they continue to believe in the ultimate validity of "socialism" in the Soviet Union? Many simply denied that what had occurred had occurred, others claimed that it all was necessary to defend the Soviet Union in the face of the world's hostility—and would be justified in the end.

Denial of what one knows but finds difficult to admit is a very human trait, but there must come a point at which rational people can no longer sustain such denial. But not for Genovese—he held on until there was no longer a Soviet Union to support. Those who believed that it would all come out well in the end cited the (in)famous cliché about breaking eggs to make an omelet. Genovese refers to this *en passant*, and somewhat disparagingly, by noting that the broken eggs were mostly (millions of) people of color. But he does not understand that the analogy itself is quite erroneous, that it completely misrepresents what democratic socialism is. In a true socialist society, each individual is economically secure and accorded full personal dignity—indeed is independent and autonomous. The cooperation on which the society depends is offered freely, without any coercion. An omelet is a blended unit in which all the elements have lost their individual identities. The democratic socialist society is not an omelet, and the analogy is completely spurious.

Genovese charges socialists, social democrats, and liberals with hypocrisy. He claims that, while denouncing Stalinism, "we of the left" supported colonialism, capitalism, and social democratic governments that in turn

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supported Stalinist practices. The "we" seems to include the entire left. Clearly, Genovese is anxious to generalize the guilt and thus diffuse his own. If all are guilty, then none are. And although I do appreciate wit and humor, and Genovese demonstrates that he is talented in that direction, his use of it in this particular essay tends to make light of the most horrendous chapter in this history of human mistreatment of humans.

As someone who was saying "a plague on both your houses" as long ago as the 1930s, I find Genovese's presentation of the views of the left disingenuous and self-serving. The depression years were a time when support of the U.S. Communist party and indeed the USSR was understandable, even acceptable, yet many "leftists" were not taken in. The U.S. socialist movement, under Norman Thomas, as well as that part of the black labor movement led by A. Philip Randolph, opposed the evils of capitalism, fascism, colonialism, and the USSR's version of communism. Yet, Thomas and Randolph were called "social fascists" and "running dogs of capitalism" by Genovese's colleagues.

Genovese's statement, and his riposte, do not contain even a hint of contrition. Instead, they reek of that arrogance and certainty that have always characterized the more articulate supporters of communism. Impervious to facts and reality, they never engaged in honest and open discussion. And, as Genovese's riposte illustrates, attacks on the person are still part of his political armament.

There is a philosophy that states that the ends do not justify the means, a position quite the opposite of that taken by Genovese and indeed all Soviet supporters. This approach states that the means used will determine the ends actually realized, regardless of the goals intended. If the goal of socialism is the free and autonomous individual, then all the devices and institutions used to achieve that goal are simply means to that end. Indeed socialism is itself only a means to the goal of the autonomous person.

If one accepts this approach, it matters little what the stated goals may be—what matters are the means used for their achievement. The Soviet Union was founded in violence, and Lenin and Stalin made it clear that they would use violence and terror to crush all opposition. Terror, repression, and violence were openly and deeply embedded in the basic institutions of their so-called "socialist" system.

The supporters of the Soviet Union were presumably idealists seeking a socialist society. They were betrayed by the object of their adoration and most have at last abandoned their support. But whatever made them supporters in the first place, and whatever made them adhere to that support in the face of great contrary evidence, is the question that remains unanswered. Despite Genovese's mea culpa, I find nothing in his statement to explain that.

I am generally reluctant to assign psychological reasons for people's actions, feeling that I do not know enough to do so, and my judgments are likely to be in error. Nevertheless, I feel that in this case such an analysis is required.

It seems to me that the persistence of support for such a horrifying structure, one that destroys the very values that the believer professes, can be explained only by a psychological need to believe in a system that provides all the answers and removes the obligation to think for oneself. Indeed, faith is required and, much like religious faith, it demands faith in omniscient beings—in this case leaders whose wisdom remains beyond challenge.

I see no indication in Genovese's essay that that psychological need has been eliminated. Given no evidence to the contrary, it is fair to assume that any person who had such a need probably still has it—and will seek another system to play the same psychological role. There are any number of ways to fulfill such a need, including at one extreme general cynicism and at the other, obedience to an authoritarian or totalitarian hierarchy.

For me the most important lesson to draw from Genovese's essay is that those who supported the Communist party beyond the 1930s are still not potential allies in my own efforts to work toward socialism by extending human rights. To be able to work with them, I would have to be convinced that their personal psychological needs have changed and that they are not still seeking that external authority to which they could surrender their autonomy. This makes them unreliable partners.

CHARLES BLOOMSTEIN
New York, N.Y.

Editors:

At the heart of Eugene Genovese's continuing darkness lies his statement "I see no theoretical or historical reason to believe that socialism must be democratic." Thus he believes that the Stalinist bureaucratic collectivist state was socialist and that its fall signified the fall and failure of socialism.

It took the Stalinist ruling class years to smash the revolution not only in the USSR but in China, Spain, and Eastern Europe. Their murderous counterrevolution advanced the cause of their ruling class, not that of the working class. Those of us who have never compromised in our struggle against capitalism **and** bureaucratic collectivism now find ourselves relegated by Genovese to our "preferred portion of the left." During the Vietnam War, for example, many of us opposed American involvement as strongly as he did, but, unlike him, we did so without supporting the other side. Now he wants to tar us all with the same brush.

What made Genovese "see the light"? Not the Dewey Commission report on the purges; not the Hitler-Stalin Pact; not the looting of Eastern Europe; not the Krushchev report; not the crushing of the East German and Polish revolts and of the Hungarian and Czech revolutions. No, he tells us that he remained a supporter of the Soviet Union "until there was nothing left to support." Presumably, if the USSR had not collapsed, he would continue to support it. His darkness will remain.

MARVIN MANDELL
West Roxbury, Mass.

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Editors:

Putting aside for a moment controversies already engendered by "The Question," since Eugene Genovese was an important figure in the pro-Soviet American left right up to the end, I regard his declaration of personal moral responsibility for the Soviets and other communists in power having broken all records for "mass slaughter" as a momentous starting point for a momentous discussion.

However, in his statement he did not give any reasons why he, personally, did what he did. In fact, he told us nothing at all about this. He wrote: "When someone gets around to asking me The Question I shall answer frankly, explaining as best I can my reasons for having gone along."

Professor Genovese, What did you know, and when did you know it? At each stage of your new learning about the mass slaughters, what did you think, what did you say to others and they to you about it, what if any steps did you take toward acknowledging or alleviating or fulfilling your moral responsibility in this connection? Why, knowing all that you knew at some point before the Soviet Union collapsed, did you wait until after it had collapsed to declare your moral responsibility?

I hope we may receive from him all his reasons—emotional, intellectual, altruistic, selfish, professional, personal, and historical—so that we may then have from him a model of personal honesty and candor on this and related questions.

RONNIE DUGGER
Wellfleet, Mass.

Editors:

Unlike Genovese I believe that the American supporters of Stalin bear far *less* moral responsibility for the misdeeds of his system than Stalin and his henchmen. Western leftists (except the few who became communist agents or spies or resident propagandists, such as Kim Philby or Anna Louise Strong) did not make a discernible contribution to the policies of communist systems that culminated in their massive violations of human rights. As a disbeliever in collective responsibility I do not think that we should hold people responsible for what they did not do. This is especially important at a time when the murky notion of "complicity" has become conventional wisdom among the "politically correct," when, for instance, all white Americans are routinely pronounced "racists" and held responsible for slavery (and its aftereffects), all males for the rapes of women, and so on.

On the other hand, many influential Western leftists provided moral support to these systems, declaring them vastly superior to Western capitalist democracies, denying that they were capable of committing moral outrages, and crediting them with ending social injustices, alienation, inequality, and discrimination of every kind. Many Western leftists not only supported these deceitful, murderous police states, but also approved of their grotesque "cults of personalities," and mistook great butchers and megalomaniacs for wise and benign fathers of their people.

Genovese is right that there has been little serious self-examination regarding the mistaken beliefs of the past, that few of the erstwhile fellow travelers, political tourists, apologists, assorted supporters, and glorifiers of communist systems came forward self-critically in recent years to publicly reevaluate their former commitments. He is also right in suggesting that little was learned from the experiences of the Soviet Union under Stalin, as "each new revolution" was applauded and morally misperceived: China under Mao, Cuba under Castro, communist Vietnam, Grenada, Nicaragua, and so on.

There have been few, if any, attempts to confront the possibility that there might have been a connection between susceptibility to the claims of these exceptionally repressive political systems and an entrenched, obligatory alienation and contempt for Western political institutions and ideals many on the left have reflexively displayed.

There have been similarly few attempts to examine the connections between the practices of the systems that used Marxism-Leninism to legitimate themselves and the nature of these theories, which evidently lent themselves to misuse. To say the least, there was *some* connection between theory and practice, ideology and reality—how much remains to be established pending the result of serious inquiry and analysis, which few leftists seem anxious to undertake.

Anti-anticommunism and the associated evasions survive and their persistence generally vindicates Genovese.

PAUL HOLLANDER
Northampton, Mass. □

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The Last Page

If you have grown up as a baseball fan, you know that one of the cardinal rules of the game is that you root for your home team. It doesn't matter if they are lousy and another team is better. Your home team is your team. Even moving doesn't change the tie. After the age of ten, your home team is your team for life.

As someone who grew up a Cleveland Indians fan, I have been tempted by baseball disloyalty for most of my adult life. The last time the Indians were in the World Series was 1954 (they lost in four straight games), and in the intervening years the Tribe has been a sorry lot. Bad trades, mental illness that ruined a star first basemen, a boating accident that killed two pitchers have made the Indians a marked team.

In 1994, however, everything seemed different. The Indians had a lineup filled with power hitters, and over the winter they acquired a decent pitching staff. The team had a real shot at winning the pennant. The baseball strike ended all that.

I'm still disappointed. I fear the Indians pitchers may have been around too long to be effective for the next season. But what bothers me most is that the baseball owners were able to force the players into a strike and then win public sympathy for themselves. In a country where every businessman takes pride in earning whatever the market will bear, the owners were able to portray the players as greedy because they refused to accept a team salary cap that would limit what they could be collectively paid.

It was hard to believe that the owners, who have never talked about putting a cap on their gate receipts or television revenues, imagined their offer would be taken seriously, but the falseness of their position got even worse when I thought of how baseball operates: as a business in which the firms (teams) in the same industry (league) are allowed to meet as a cartel and make agreements on everything from rules to the awarding of franchises. Since 1922, when the Supreme Court ruled that baseball was immune from the Sherman Antitrust Act, the game has operated with a freedom no other sport or industry enjoys.

What is to be done? One step is to end baseball's antitrust exemption. A bill known as the Professional Baseball Antitrust Reform Act would have done just that and had both Republican and Democratic co-sponsors in the last Congress. But even more important is legislation that would acknowledge the degree to which baseball operates as a quasipublic trust, depending on taxes to build most of its stadiums and local government to operate the roads and police that make safe access to the game possible.

We need a federal agency to make sure that baseball franchises are granted with the same care that television stations are licensed. And we need to make sure that the commissioner of baseball is an impartial figure, chosen not just by the owners—as is now the case—but by the player representatives of each team as well as by the mayors of each city in which baseball is played.

What is at stake in changing the way baseball is run is not as dramatic as what was at stake in 1947 when Jackie Robinson broke baseball's color barrier. But baseball reform isn't small potatoes either. The game is a $1.5 billion-a-year business that millions watch. Democratizing it would provide us with an important example of how to deal with an industry that is both public and private.

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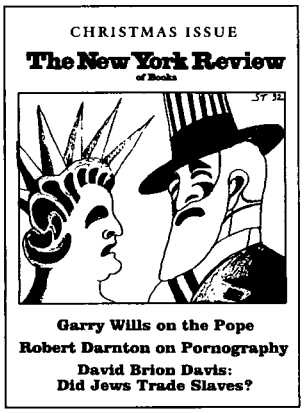

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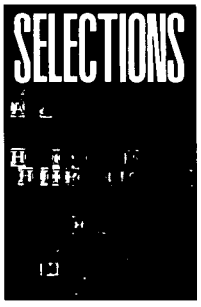

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